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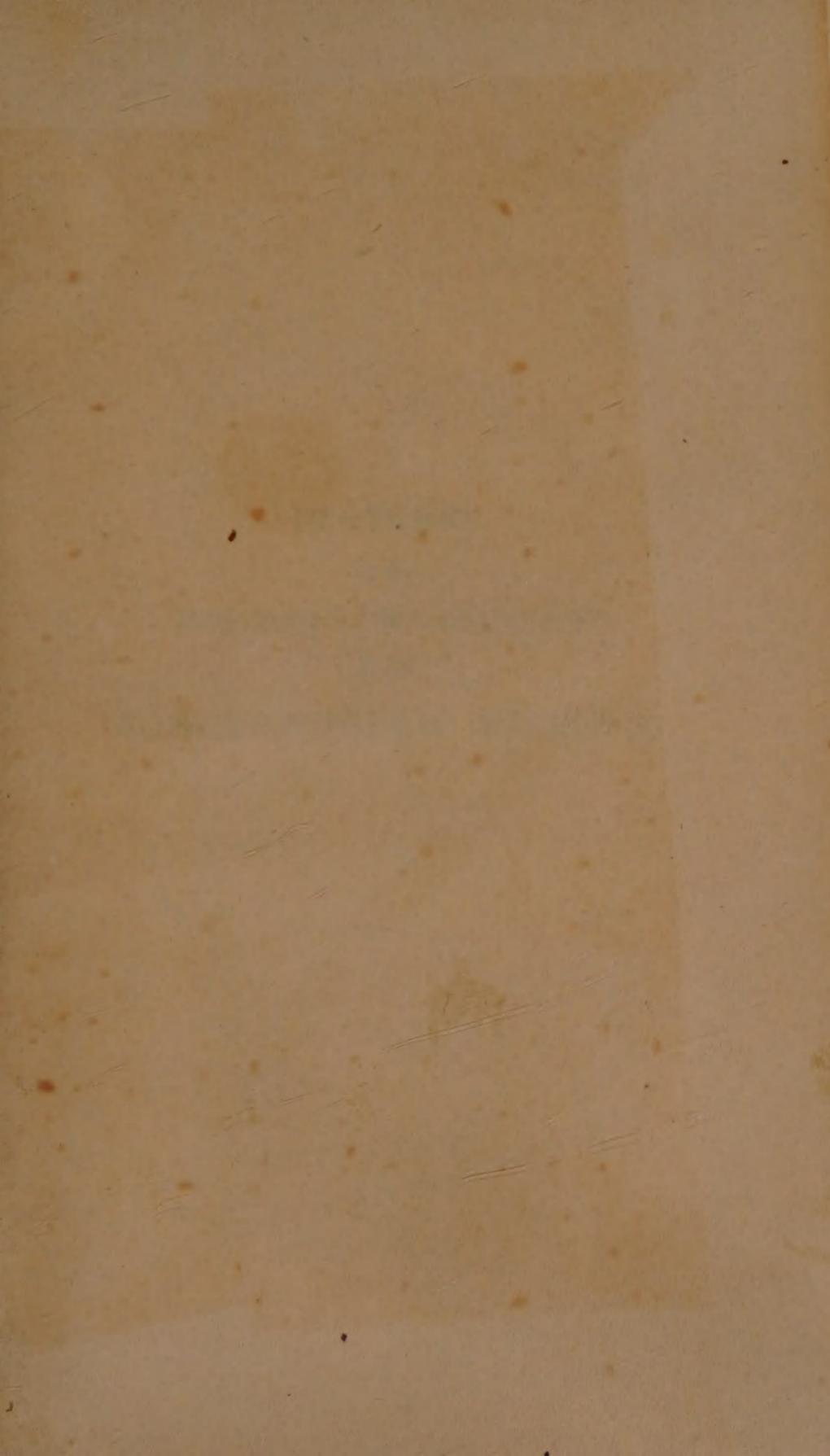
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LECTURES
ON THE
PRINCIPLES AND INSTITUTIONS
OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION.

48

LECTURES

ON THE

PRINCIPLES AND INSTITUTIONS

OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION;

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY JOSEPH FLETCHER, M.A.

ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST.
Matt. xxiii. 8.

SECOND EDITION,
REVISED, CORRECTED, AND ENLARGED.

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PREFACE.

THE principles of the Roman Catholic religion have become widely circulated in every part of our country, since the repeal of the penal statutes, which tended so powerfully to prevent their diffusion. In particular districts, the numbers of those who profess them have greatly increased ; and in some of our larger towns, their places of worship are distinguished by a splendour and magnificence which render them almost equal to the churches of our national establishment, and exhibit visible proofs of the opulence and advancement of their communion. Their publications are numerous ; their clergy are highly respectable in character and talents ; and their exertions in support of their own principles are zealous and incessant. It is not unusual for their priests to deliver lectures once or twice in the week, during the season of Lent, on those subjects which naturally involve the points at issue between themselves and the Protestants ; by which

means considerable interest and curiosity are excited, and persons of all denominations are occasionally attracted to their chapels.

To these facts, the Author has adverted, not for the purpose of censure and animadversion, but to shew the necessity of corresponding zeal and activity on the part of Protestants in the defence and explanation of those great principles, which constitute the basis of their secession from the Church of Rome. Whatever regret he may feel, at the success of the means employed in the dissemination of opposite principles, he can feel none, at the liberty enjoyed by his neighbours: nor would he wish his opposition to their religious system, to be considered as resulting in any degree from the influence of political motives. On the contrary, if there be any sentiment, which he is disposed to hold with the most tenacious grasp, it is this—that every individual and every society possess an unalienable right to worship God, according to the dictates of their consciences; and that all secular interference *on account of religion*, by penalties or restrictions, is irrational, impolitic and anti-scriptural. The only

effectual means of counteracting error, are persuasion and argument, and these alone comport with the sacredness of truth and the dignity of religion.

The substance of the following Lectures, was delivered some years ago, in a series of discourses to the Author's congregation, in consequence of the zealous efforts of the Roman Catholic Priest, then resident in Blackburn, in the public vindication of his own principles. As this vindication led to frequent animadversions on the Protestant cause, and excited by its novelty unusual interest and attention, the Author felt compelled to enter on the course, which, with considerable alterations and enlargements, he now presents to the public. It has been his wish to exhibit a compendious view of the leading points of controversy between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. He is aware that those, whose voluntary or professional studies have made them well acquainted with this department of polemic theology will not expect any thing new on the subject: but as the controversy demands attention, from the repeated attacks which are made on the Protestant

separation—as serious apprehensions of the revival of the Papal religion are entertained, especially since the restoration of the House of Bourbon—and as it is desirable that the rising generation should be well informed on the reasons of our secession from the Church of Rome, it is hoped, this volume will be found to contain a faithful exposition of the principles on which that secession is founded, and contribute a portion of influence to the support of a cause, which is identified with the interests of religious liberty, the diffusion of Christian truth, the happiness of man, and the glory of God. To all these high and sacred ends, the Author considers the principles of Protestantism as directly subservient; and he would deprecate indifference concerning them, as highly injurious to the welfare of mankind, and the prosperity of the Church of Christ. It is on the ground of this conviction, that he offers no apology for the warmth and interest which may be occasionally manifest in some of the following discourses. He trusts there will be found no violation of candour, and he is conscious that there is no intentional misrepresentation. He has endeavoured to ascertain the principles of the sys-

tem he has opposed, from genuine and authentic sources of information—from the writings of some of its ablest advocates, the language of their authorised confessions, and the decrees and canons of their councils. It will afford the Writer of this Volume, no ordinary satisfaction, if any of the Papal communion, are led to examine its arguments without prejudice and prepossession; but whatever may be the impression produced on such readers, he hopes that by the blessing of God, it will be conducive to the instruction of the inquiring, the confirmation of the wavering, and the stability of the faithful.

Blackburn, Dec. 12, 1816.



ADVERTISEMENT

To the Second Edition.

THE author cannot suffer this edition to appear before the public, without gratefully acknowledging the rapid and extensive sale of the first edition; and adverting to the notice which the Lectures have met with, from the enemies as well as the friends of those great principles, which he has endeavoured to vindicate and explain. Soon after the work appeared, a pamphlet was published by a *Mr. Joseph Fairclough*, on the "Rule of Faith," which in the course of a few months was followed by another, "On the Church." It was announced by their author, that all the topics of the controversy were to be successively discussed in a series of pamphlets; but at the end of the second number, this intention was formally renounced, and the writer satisfied himself by referring his readers to the recent productions of the *Rev. John Lingard*, as a sufficient refutation of all that the Lecturer had advanced, or might hereafter choose to advance on the subject! It did not probably occur to Mr. Fairclough, that by this convenient reference he might have saved himself altogether the trouble of writing; and by a public

advertisement of the works of Mr. Lingard, announced a convincing answer to all Protestant objectors—past, present, and to come!

If the author of the Lectures had thought these pamphlets of Mr. Fairclough, on any ground whatever, entitled to notice, he would long ago have replied to them; for in the whole course of his reading on this controversy, he never met with any defence of the Church of Rome that was more feebly constructed in its reasonings, or more vulnerable in its positions. He feels no hesitation in asserting that the main arguments advanced in the Lectures, are altogether unnoticed. As to the large proportion of extraneous matter, in the shape of illiberal remark, and abusive declamation, he deems it utterly unworthy of reply. He believes, that among those who have read the pamphlets, and who have been unbiassed by sectarian prejudices, there is but one opinion concerning their character: and it was under this conviction, that he formed the determination to treat them with silence. Should the reader wish to be entertained with some specimens of their reasoning and style, he may find ample satisfaction in an article on Mr. Fairclough, in the Eclectic Review for July 1817, immediately following one on the Lectures. The author gratefully acknowledges his obligations to the unknown writer; and refers to the latter article, as a sufficient exposure of illogical absurdities and gross misrepresen-

tation. On the general subject of these pamphlets, he begs leave to add the following remarks, in addition to what he has advanced in the first and second Lectures.

This part of the controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics may be reduced within a narrow range by a single question, involving an appeal to the ultimate principle of religious belief. Both parties for instance, admit certain doctrines generally termed orthodox. Why does a Roman Catholic believe them? He answers—because the Church in all ages has believed them. According to his principles, *this* is the ground of his belief. It is sufficient in his view of the matter, for all the purposes of rational credence, if he can adduce the fact, that the doctrines in question have been uniformly, and perpetually, and successively believed by the Church. If Scripture be cited as asserting them, he does not believe them merely *on that account*, but because the Church has authorised such an interpretation of Scripture as warrants the belief of these doctrines. So reasons Father Buffier in the appendix to his philosophical inquiry into the origin of opinions, entitled, “First Truths.” “The Christian religion,” says the learned Jesuit, “is no other but the body “of the faithful, or church of Christ, which tes-“tifies what God has said and commanded; so “that true theology solely consists in proving, “first, that the testimony of the Christian church

"is irreproachable; secondly, that the same church, in consequence of the command of God, teaches us the articles that constitute the object of our belief and worship. Every thing else appears a matter of supererogation in divinity."* Now before a Roman Catholic can rationally establish these propositions, he must be prepared to prove, *first*, what is meant by the Christian church; secondly, he must shew that the church of Rome, is *exclusively* the Christian church; thirdly, he must ascertain and develope the proofs of the testimony of this church being "irreproachable," or infallible, or in other words, that there is no reason at any time for calling its testimony in question; fourthly, he must establish the identity of the church at the present day, with what it was in the beginning, and shew that there has been no deviation from its primitive character; and lastly, he must prove that the only true account of the Christian Religion is to be found in the actual and successive belief of this church from age to age.

But inquires the Protestant, how can the terms even of the first proposition be understood without appealing to some antecedent authority? How can we know what is meant by a church, and by a *Christian* church, unless we appeal to some testimony which is independent of the conceived authority of the church? Before we believe that

* *Buffier's First Truths.* App. p. 372.

the testimony of a church is “irreproachable,” we must have a criterion by which to ascertain what *is* a church? That criterion, whatever it be, by which we judge of the authority of a church, cannot be uninterrupted tradition. Should this be assumed, it must be shewn how the fact of a successive and uninterrupted belief, obtaining in a certain community, is itself sufficient to establish the claim of that community to be considered the church of Christ. Now in contravention of such a claim, it may be asserted, that the utmost that tradition proves is the *mere successiveness of belief*; but this can never prove the belief to be well founded. That which proves a belief to be well founded must be—*the evidence in which, at the beginning it originated, and not the fact of its continuing to be possessed afterwards*. But the fact of its continuing to be possessed from age to age is nothing more or less than *tradition*; and therefore tradition cannot prove the church of Rome, or any other church, to be the sole and exclusive and infallible depository of the faith. Tradition, may prove that the members of that church have believed these doctrines, but as there must have been some reason for this belief, when *first* it was entertained, the ultimate proof of its being so at this time, must be that which led the *first* members of this church to entertain it. Admitting their faith to be right—it must have been founded on something distinct from tradition. Now that,

whatever it be, which constituted the ultimate reason of faith when it first began to be possessed, and when of course no tradition existed to support it, is the only *ultimate* ground of rational belief in every successive age. If the Roman Catholic resort to Scripture as that ultimate ground, as furnishing the reason which in the first instance, supported the belief; then he is brought at once to a principle which enables the Protestant to meet him on tangible ground. Then the object of controversy is to ascertain how far the infallibility of the church of Rome is supported by *scriptural testimony*: and by this testimony alone, can the question be determined on rational and on Christian principles.

But the Roman Catholic replies—‘ You must depend on the Church for the very testimony to which you appeal. The Church has preserved it—the Church presents it to you—the Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” ’ To this the Protestant answers—Is the testimony true because the Church has preserved it pure and uncorrupted from age to age? Admitting the fact of this transmission and guardianship, does it prove its truth and authority? If for a moment this can be supposed—then on what ground was the testimony believed before the Church was formed? It is obvious that the first Churches were formed *in consequence* of believing the testimony, which by means of written and authentic

documents has been perpetuated from that period to the present time. The evidence of the truth of that testimony was the original ground of their belief, and therefore the belief itself could never constitute a proof of the truth of the testimony. But the Roman Catholic makes the truth of the testimony depend upon the fact of its being believed ; and this illogical principle is the actual basis of that authority which he claims on behalf of the Church. Suppose all the primitive Churches either personally or by representatives, had met together, and issued such a dogma as this—“ What we believe to be a divine testimony, is a “ divine testimony because we believe it.” What impression would such a canon have produced on the world ! And yet on the principles of the Roman Church, they might have announced and published it ; and on the ground of such a declaration alone, have claimed universal and unhesitating submission. But we meet with nothing like this principle in the apostolic or ecclesiastical records of primitive Christianity. The first Christians rested their faith on the evidence of divine authority attached to the oral testimony of their first instructors. The visible and indisputable proofs of their inspiration rendered their written testimony of equal authority : and when this written testimony was all that remained, we find the Churches and Pastors of the first century exclusively and invariably appealing to it, as the rule and the reason of their faith.

The moment we admit the truth of the written testimony, on the ground of the identical evidence which proved the oral testimony to be divinely accredited, we are in possession of a standard of doctrine that is intelligible and decisive. If this testimony asserts, or can be proved to assert, that any particular Church is constituted the sole and authoritative judge of its sense—the infallible expositor of its meaning, then it is right to submit to the decisions of that Church. Still, even in this case, the reason of submission is the testimony itself, which by the assumed proof, has vested exclusive and unalienable prerogatives in that particular Church. Admitting this position, we must have the evidence adduced from the *Scriptures alone*, to support these prerogatives. Here, as in reference to other doctrines, tradition is of no use, as to any authoritative determination of the question, and therefore the inquiry must be altogether restricted to the fair and rational interpretation of the record itself.

The author conceives that the following propositions are involved in these reasonings, and may be deduced from them.

1st. That the evidence of the divine authority of scriptural testimony is altogether independent of human declarations concerning that authority.

2nd. That the fact of being employed in the preservation and transmission of this testimony, affords no security for the right understanding of its meaning,

3rd. That tradition does nothing more than assist us, in ascertaining what has been thought about the meaning of the testimony, and therefore can never constitute the reason for believing in the testimony itself, or for admitting any doctrine contained in it.

4th. That the reasons of faith antecedent to all traditional testimony concerning the truth believed, constitute the only rational grounds of faith in every age.

5th. That because the scriptures contain the authentic record of these primary reasons, they are exclusively sufficient for all the purposes of religious instruction.

In this edition there are several alterations and enlargements, tending, as the author conceives, to the general improvement of the work. He has also prefixed a copious Analysis of the Lectures, for the purpose of facilitating a reference to the arguments and illustrations. In numerous instances he has been gratified by unexpected citations and extracts in publications that have recently appeared; and the testimonies of private and of public approbation induce him to hope, that his labours in this important controversy will be ultimately conducive to the great interests of “pure and undefiled Religion.”

Blackburn, 2nd Nov. 1816.

ANALYSIS OF THE LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

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quainted to pray for us, and *praying to him*, or to one we know not for the blessings we may need on the ground of his intercession. 4. Such an invocation of saints and angels is unsupported by scriptural authority. 5. It directly interferes with the mediation of Jesus Christ—and directs the attention of men from his intercession as the only meritorious cause of our acceptance with God. 6. It is directly idolatrous in its tendencies—this proved—especially by the prayers and thanksgivings addressed to the Virgin Mary—unscriptural nature of the homage paid to her—Concluding remarks on the communion of saints and the intercession of Christ. Page 196—221.

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LECTURES

ON THE PRINCIPLES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION.

LECTURE I.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

“ As the Christian ministry is established for the instruction of men, throughout every age in truth and holiness, it must adapt itself to the ever-shifting scenes of the moral world, and stand ready to repel the attacks of error under whatever form they may appear.” Supported by these views of the nature and design of the office I sustain, it will not be deemed a rash and obtrusive attempt, if I deviate from the ordinary course of ministerial instruction, and commence a series of controversial lectures on the reasons of our separation from the Church of Rome. Though the inquiry on this subject, be at all times interesting and important, I frankly confess, that I should not *now* have entered upon it, had not local circumstances, in my apprehension, most imperiously required it. You are well acquainted with those circumstances ; and their notoriety presents a sufficient reason for my undertaking. In appearing thus prominently, on behalf of the Protestant cause, I hope no suspicion will be entertained of the slightest reflection

on those zealous, and I doubt not, well intended exertions which have furnished the immediate occasion of my present appearance before you. Such exertions are highly commendable. It is, or ought to be a principle of acknowledged authority among Protestant churches, that every man has a right to explain and vindicate his religious convictions: and I hope that day will never dawn on Britain, when any religious party whatever, shall be prohibited from freely discussing, and recommending their respective peculiarities. May the spirit of intolerance never darken by its malignant shade, nor invest with its polluted atmosphere, the churches of the reformation; but a practical conformity to the “law of love,” at once adorn and defend their common principles!

It should never be forgotten that the interests of truth are always ultimately promoted by free inquiry. I feel therefore thankful for the opportunity which the circumstances alluded to, have presented, of conducting an inquiry into the principles and institutions of the Roman Catholic religion. For a long period, the question respecting the origin and reasons of the Protestant secession from the hierarchy of Rome, has excited in this country comparatively little attention. Intermingled indeed with political discussions on the extent of Catholic claims, the religious and ecclesiastical peculiarities of their system have been occasionally investigated; but it is not my intention to introduce any remarks on that controversy. The collisions of party politics, and secular debate should never be blended with the explanation and defence of Christian truth. On the contrary, to explain, illustrate, and improve the general principles on which alone our Protestantism can be vindicated, is the sole object of my inquiries. It is to be regretted that much

ignorance prevails on these subjects. Thousands are Protestants for the same reason that their neighbours are Roman Catholics—because it is the religion of their fathers; and are often less informed, and consequently less capable of defending their cause than those against whom they protest. To remove this ignorance—to present a candid and rational vindication of the grounds of our secession—to enable the members of Protestant churches, to defend themselves against sophistical and unscriptural reasonings—and to furnish an inquirer of the papal communion with materials for reflection, if any such are disposed to make use of them—are the principal objects I would endeavour, conscientiously and faithfully to regard in the course of our subsequent investigation. The zeal of our opponents, naturally leads us to inquire—Can we defend ourselves?—are we in reality separatists from the only—and the apostolic church?—are we out of the pale of the true Catholic communion? and must we suffer eternal damnation for venturing to dispute the authority and infallibility of the See of Rome, or the Church of Rome? I wish with all candour and impartiality to state my convictions on these points: and if any expressions unbecoming the sanctity of this place, or tending to produce the feelings of irritation, apart from the natural tendency of the arguments themselves, should escape me in the warmth and ardour of discussion, I trust they will be consigned to the oblivion they deserve. I could wish none to retire from these services under any other impressions, than those which might secure more lively gratitude to God, for the revelation of his will—a more earnest desire to understand its sacred truths, and to obey its holy injunctions—and a more sincerely benevolent disposition towards all those who conscientiously

differ from us. “The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all men.” “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

In all religious inquiries, it is of the first importance to ascertain *the rule of judgment*, and *the standard of appeal*. On this subject the Protestant asserts “THE EXCLUSIVE SUFFICIENCY OF “SCRIPTURE AS THE ONLY AUTHORITATIVE “RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE, IN MATTERS “OF RELIGION.” The arguments by which the sole and exclusive authority is supported, are derived from the variety and combination of evidence, which establish the inspiration of the Scriptures in general, and of the New Testament in particular. The proofs of that inspiration are not dependent on a single insulated fact, but on a series of facts, tending to secure the highest degree of moral demonstration. The miraculous agency employed to accredit the early promulgation of Christian doctrine—the marvellous extent of that promulgation, by methods on the ordinary principles of human action, totally inadequate to account for it—the accomplishment of prophecies, too minute for human sagacity to have contrived, and too remote for human conjecture to have foreseen—thesublimity and grandeur of its peculiar discoveries, the adaptation of those discoveries to the moral condition of the world—and the pure benevolent and pacific tendency of all its principles and institutions—present, when distinctly examined, convincing proofs of the divinity of our holy religion: and in their aggregate, or collective result, must compel every candid and reflecting mind to pronounce the records of that religion, “THE WORD OF GOD THAT LIVETH AND ABIDETH “FOR EVER.”

On these topics, there is no immediate contro-

versy in the present discussion. But in order to invalidate the *exclusive* authority that in our view, naturally and necessarily arises from the inspiration of Scripture, the Romanists have recourse to *the prior authority of their Church, as “the supreme judge of controversy, and the sacred rule of faith.”**

“The Catholic judge in controversies,” says Bishop Chaloner, “is the Church of God—from “whose decisions, no appeal is allowed, to the dead letter of Scripture,”† Hence they assert that, notwithstanding the proofs of inspiration already referred to, the fact of that inspiration, rests ultimately on the testimony of the Church of Rome: and the infallibility of the church is involved in the admission, that the canonical books of Scripture are the word of God. For—they triumphantly inquire, who declared them canonical? Was it not the testimony of the Church that established their authority? Hence they infer that there previously existed a living, oracular, and infallible tribunal; and that to that tribunal we must appeal in order to determine the authority, and ascertain the sense of Scripture.‡ Now on this fallacious argument I remark—

FIRST. *That it was not the Church of Rome nor a council convened by the authority of the Church of Rome, that first ascertained and determined the canon of Scripture.* The facts of the case, as far as they can be discovered from the historic records and traditional fragments of the first and second centuries directly support this assertion. The writings of the New, like those of the Old Testament, were composed “at sundry times;” and local circumstances, affecting

* Bishop Hay's Sincere Christian, Vol. I. p. 184. † The Grounds of the Old Religion, p. 32. ‡ See Appendix, NOTE A.

individual churches, frequently occasioned their publication. Those of general interest, such as the gospels and the Catholic epistles, would be immediately and universally circulated; while the letters directed to particular churches, would naturally require a longer portion of time to secure the same extent of circulation and authority in the Christian world. It is not difficult to ascertain the principle on which the primitive churches proceeded, in their admission of writings which were to be considered *authoritative* in all matters of religion. At an early period they were exposed to the intrusion of fictitious and unauthenticated accounts of the life of Christ, and the labours of his Apostles. This is evident from the introduction to the Gospel of St. Luke. (ch. i. 1—4.) The great inquiry, in order to determine what was apocryphal, and what might be entitled to the authority of a *canon* or rule* in sacred affairs, would invariably respect, the proof of the document in question being the composition of an inspired writer. If on this point its genuineness could be established, its divine authority would be immediately acknowledged. For, according to the declaration of St. Paul, “God had appointed the Apostles, FIRST in the church.” 1 Cor. xii. 28. They possessed a peculiar and exclusive authority; and the manner in which their writings are referred to by the ear-

* The word *κανών* signifies a rule or standard. Schleusner and Parkhurst derive it from *καννη* (a cane,) obviously of Hebrew origin; [Job xxxviii. 3. Ezek. xi. 3, 5.] because the measuring rod was formerly made of cane. Hence the word is metaphorically applied, to Christian doctrine, Gal. vi. 16. ὅσοι τῷ κανόνῃ τέτω σοιχησθεῖν “as many as walk according to this rule.” See also Phil. iii. 16. It is not improbable, that the word *canon* was applied to the sacred writings, in consequence of this apostolic use of it.

liest Fathers, clearly indicates the universal sentiment which prevailed in the primitive churches on this subject.* It is in fact, by a minute investigation of such references, and an accurate collation of them with the apostolic records, that the actual state of early opinions respecting the sacred canon has been so satisfactorily ascertained.†

There is one decisive proof, that neither the Church of Rome nor a council convoked by its authority, nor any other council whatever, in the first instance determined what were the canonical books, and that proof is the singular fact *that we do not find any catalogue of such books in the decrees of the early general councils.* How then, it may be inquired, was the canon of the New Testament determined? "Determined," says Dr. Lardner, who was well qualified by his extensive researches into the earliest records of Christian antiquity to ascertain the fact—"not by the authority of councils; but the books of which it consists, were known to be the writings of the apostles and evangelists, in the same way and manner that we know the works of Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, to be theirs; and the canon was formed upon the ground of an unanimous, or generally concurring testimony and tradition." *Credibility.* Vol. vi. p. 27. Hence I remark,

SECONDLY, That whatever church or council might publish a declaration concerning the canon

* "Besides our gospels, and the acts of the apostles, no Christian history, claiming to be written by an apostle, or apostolical man, is quoted within three hundred years after the birth of Christ, by any writer now extant or known; or if quoted, is not quoted without marks of censure and rejection." *Paley's Evidences.* Vol. I. p. 294.

† See Appendix. NOTE B.

of the New Testament,* the authority of that canon could not arise from the declaration itself, but from the antecedent evidence on which it was founded. This is too obvious to need either proof or illustration. All that a council, whether provincial or general could do in such circumstances, would be, to ascertain what was generally acknowledged by the churches they represented. Long before any such declaration was made, *Origen*, as cited by *Eusebius*, referred to the gospels and epistles of Paul, one of Peter and one of John, as *universally received by the church.*† “Before the middle of the second century,” says *Mosheim*, “the greatest part of the books of the New Testament were read in every Christian society throughout the world, and received as a divine rule of faith and manners.—These sacred writings were carefully separated from several human compositions upon the same subject, either by some of the apostles themselves, who lived so long, or by their disciples and successors, who were spread abroad through all nations. We are well assured, (on the testimony of *Eusebius*) that the four gospels were collected during the life of St. John, and that the three first received the approbation of this divine apostle. And why may we not suppose that the other books of the New Testament were gathered together at the same time.”‡

The only advantage that could be secured by

* These reasonings are confined to the canon of the New Testament, because the canon of the Old Testament was settled long before the hierarchy of Rome existed. The reader will find some interesting details on this subject, in *Prideaux's Connections*. Vol. II. 394—405, 665—667.

† He calls them *αναγιρρητα* and *ομολογεμενα undisputed* and *acknowledged*. *Euseb.* Eccl. Hist. iii. 24.

‡ *Mosheim's Ecol. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 88.

a declaration concerning the canon of the New Testament, would be to condemn what was spurious and false. The evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of the acknowledged writings would be concentrated and arranged ; and what had previously depended on traditional authority and the general concurrence of accredited testimonies, would be embodied in one specific declaration, as the universal belief of the Christian world. But this was not the formation of the rule, it was only its promulgation. It was not the creation, of an authority unknown before, but a legal provision for the perpetuity of a record ; and was evidently designed to preserve the sacred writings, entire and uncorrupted.* But I observe,

THIRDLY. That unless the antecedent authority of the New Testament, prior to all such declarations of it, be acknowledged, it will be impossible to prove the divinity of the Christian Religion.† For the fact that certain writings were invariably regarded as indisputable and authoritative, by those who had it in their power to ascertain the truth of what they contained ;—who were under

* See Appendix. NOTE C.

† It is actually the assertion of Cardinal Bellarmine, “if we take away the authority of the existing Church—the whole Christian faith becomes doubtful ;” and again, he says “the stability of (Christian) doctrines depends on the authority of the existing Church.” The Cardinal’s words are—“Nam si tollamus auctoritatem præsentis ecclesiæ—in dubium revocari poterunt, omnium conciliorum decreta, et tota fides Christiana.—Omnium dogmatum firmitas, pendet ab auctoritate præsentis Ecclesiæ.” *Bellar.* De Effectu. Sacram: Lib. 2. Cap. 25. Hence it follows that all the mighty assemblage of evidence, by which prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ himself established the divine authority of the gospel, is nothing, till human testimony itself confirms it. They might as well assert that we had no reason to believe the Copernican System of philosophy to be true, till the sentence of the Vatican sanctioned and confirmed the discoveries of modern science !

the strongest of all motives to make this inquiry—who gave the most convincing proofs that they had made it, and were prepared to undergo every trial that might be requisite, to attest the sincerity of their convictions—the fact, that such men, in such circumstances acknowledged the truth and authority of such writings, is precisely the historic proof of their genuineness and authenticity, and consequently the basis of their divine authority. Let it for a moment be granted, that we have no evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament, till the Church of Rome, assures us of the fact—let it be assumed that there are no documents of prior date to that ecclesiastical enactment on which we can depend, and that the authority of that said enactment is our only, or our ultimate reason for believing in the Christian records at all—and the whole fabric of Christianity is, by that very assumption, overthrown. Suppose the Church of Rome had never existed, and that to this very day there had been no formal declaration respecting the canon by any church or churches upon earth; if the ordinary methods of transmission had been possessed, by which the genuineness and authenticity of the Greek and Roman authors have been established, the divine authority of the Christian revelation would have been as clear, as independent and as satisfactory as it was in the first age of its promulgation. Manuscripts of various parts of the New Testament, have successively existed from the beginning of the Christian æra, though the original copies have been long since lost; those manuscripts have been translated into various languages and preserved in ancient versions; citations and references are to be found in ecclesiastical and theological writings from the commencement of Christianity, to the present time;

the laws of historic credibility and the principles of philological criticism which apply to secular facts and classic authors, are capable of a similar application to the records of Christian truth; and if all these sources of information, and means of inquiry be combined, the result will be precisely, what we are prepared to expect—($\tauὴν ἀσφάλειαν λόγων$) “the CERTAINTY of the things in which we have been instructed.”

It is not requisite indeed, that every individual reader of the New Testament should go through this process of laborious inquiry, for the same reason that it is not necessary, he should go through all the proof that Cicero and Cæsar wrote the books which bear their names, in order to understand their writings. It is quite sufficient, if the matter be capable of proof; and if it be as capable of proof now, at this remote period, as it was when the declaration of an ecclesiastical council announced it to the world. Now this, I contend, is the case in reference to the Christian Scriptures. Documents and proofs altogether independent of synodical or conventional authority, establish those facts, which constitute the basis of the Christian System; and such seems to have been the wisdom of its divine Founder, that whatever be our interpretation of the doctrines, or whatever our views of the institutions of Christianity, the evidence of the facts remains unalterably the same. But to make the truth or authority of those facts dependent on the declaration of an opinion concerning them, is a total inversion of all the laws of just reasoning, and a virtual abandonment of the divinity of our religion. But in opposition to this self-contradictory argument, I observe,

FOURTHLY. That if the authority of the sacred canon rest on the supposed prior authority of the

Church of Rome, it will be impossible to prove the authority of that church from the sacred canon.—The assumption involves in it the point to be proved ; for according to the Romanists, we have no reason to believe that the New Testament is a divine revelation, independently of the declaration of the Church on the subject. But a derived and dependent authority can never be the source of that authority from which it is derived ; and therefore to appeal to that derived authority in defence of it, is obviously futile and absurd. Were the advocates of popery consistent, they would never introduce citations from the New Testament to confirm either their principles or practices. They might employ them for the sake of convenient illustration when capable of supporting an ingenious construction in their favour ; but they should indulge an equally convenient forgetfulness of their declarations, when not sufficiently flexible for their purpose. And indeed some views of their conduct and policy, prove that this hypothetical deduction is correctly drawn. Many defences and pleadings of Catholic writers refer to the Fathers, with as implicit a submission, as to the Scriptures ; and the qualifications which they connect with their admission of the right of the laity to read the Scriptures, by which that right can be enlarged and contracted at pleasure, clearly indicate their views of its insufficiency.

It is natural then to inquire what is the basis of that authority which the Church of Rome assumes as her peculiar and exclusive prerogative—an authority which determines the canon of Scripture—which gives to that canon all its sacredness and its claims—and, which, having thus created the rule, determines by the same authority, its meaning and its obligations ? For this spiritual power still exists, and revels in its despotism. The un-

derstandings and consciences of millions, are still in a state of unhallowed and quiescent prostration. Its tremendous pressure is still incumbent on the energies of free inquiry ; and investing itself, with the attributes of Divinity, it still demands unresisting, implicit and universal subjection. The penetrating genius of Pascal, and the gentle ethereal spirit of Fenelon, were alike awed by its mysterious power ; and in opposition to the conclusions, to which their own vigorous and manly reasonings might have led them, they exhibited the melancholy spectacle of spiritual submission to an intangible, an irresponsible—an *earthly* tribunal ! Whence then originated this authority, and on what is it founded ? Prescriptive right, immemorial usage, and general consent, are all insufficient to support this tremendous claim.—Such a domination must have higher credentials, if it pretend to an origin that is divine. In the sober estimate of a rational enquirer, these, either separatively or combined, can never justify the claim of infallibility ; for when minutely examined, they amount to nothing more than an acknowledgment of the fact, that such an authority has existed in former times, and is still exercised over the faith and consciences of men. The utmost therefore that tradition can do, is, to prove the antiquity of the claim, not to support it.

Are the Scriptures referred to ? It has already been made to appear that this reference involves in it a principle, which at once undermines the foundation of that authority for which they contend. For such an appeal admits the right of inquiry, as belonging to those with whom they contend. It also concedes the existance of a standard, by which to guide and regulate their respective inquiries. But if there be such a standard, then that, concerning which the inquiry is

instituted, cannot be itself the standard, and the antecedent all-sufficiency of the Church must be abandoned, as an indefensible claim. Instead, however, of taking any further advantage of the fatal concession implied in an appeal to the Scriptures on this subject, I shall attempt to prove,

FIFTHLY. *That the authority claimed by the Church of Rome, is totally unsupported by the New Testament.*

1. The explanation of the word *church*, as set forth by Roman Catholic writers, and assumed in all their reasonings on the subject as an accurate interpretation of the term, is altogether gratuitous and anti-scriptural. The Greek word (*εκκλησια*) has only two senses attached to it in the New Testament. It is applied either to a particular congregation of professing Christians, assembling in one place for the purpose of Christain fellowship; or to the whole collective body of Christians, who have existed or ever shall exist in the world. In no other sense does the word occur in any part in the New Testament. It is never applied to a clerical synod or an episcopal convocation; nor to pastors separate from their congregations. "In any intermediate sense," says an able and most impartial critic on the language of the New Testament, "between a single congregation, "and the whole community of Christians, not one "instance can be brought, of the application of "the word in sacred writ. We speak now, in- "deed, (and this has been the manner for ages) of "ths Gallican Church, the Greek Church, the "Church of England, the Church of Scotland, as of "societies independent and complete in themselves. "Such a phraseology was never adopted in the "days of the Apostles. They did not say, the "Church of Asia, or the Church of Macedonia, "or the Church of Achaia; but the Churches of

" God in Asia, the Churches in Macedonia, the
" Churches in Achaia. The plural number is in-
" variably used, when more congregations than
" one are spoken of, unless the subject be of the
" whole commonwealth of Christ. Nor is this
" the manner of the penmen of sacred writ only.
" It is the constant usage of the term, in the writ-
" ings of Ecclesiastical authors for the two first
" centuries.*

Every organized society assumes some principle as its basis; and in an inquiry respecting the constitution of a religious society, special importance must attach to right views on this subject. A church of Christ, according to Scriptural testimony, is not a mere assembly or aggregation of people combined by political arrangements, and dependent on the will and authority of a civil government. It is not the accidental association of a number of individuals and families, who may happen to live within the artificial boundaries of a parish. It is not a promiscuous crowd of various and opposite characters, who meet together once or twice a week, because of the local convenience of the place, or the conceived attractions of a preacher. In all these reasons or grounds of union, we can recognize no scriptural principle. We can perceive only, the authority of power, the influence of custom, or the effect of accident; and though under the control of divine agency, their ultimate operation may be beneficial, yet in their immediate action we trace nothing at all

* Dr. Campbell's 'Lectures on Ecclesiastical History.' Vol. I. p. 204, 205. He adds, in immediate connection with the above cited passage—"The only instance to the contrary, that "I remember to have observed, is in the epistles of Ignatius, on "which I have already remarked."—In a preceding part of the lecture he shews that there are sufficient reasons for calling in question the genuineness, or "at least the integrity" of these epistles,

amounting to *religious conviction*; so that when their force is suspended or counteracted, the union is dissolved! The principle of scriptural union appears to be—*the knowledge and influence of divine truth, leading to a voluntary association of believers for the purposes of mutual edification, in the observance of all divine institutions.* Thus the first churches were constituted in the apostolic age. The truth of the glorious gospel, attested by “infallible proofs,” was proclaimed to men for “the obedience of faith.” Wherever it was cordially received, it became, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the principle of obedience; it constrained those who had “given themselves to the Lord, to give themselves to one another according to the will of God.” It led those, whom the providence of God had stationed near each other, to “meet in one place,” and to submit to all the laws and ordinances which Christ had enjoined, either by his own authority, or the delegated authority of his Apostles. Here we witness the result of personal conviction, the effect of enlightened principle; and in all succeeding ages, those have most nearly resembled the primitive churches, who have formed their union on the basis of evangelical truth, and have regarded that truth as the ground of their hope, the support of their holiness, and the firm bond of their mutual attachment, and zealous co-operation. In the constitution of a scriptural Church, we recognize the authority of Christ as its warrant, the truth of Christ as its foundation, and agreement respecting that truth as the principle of fellowship.*

* “The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached and the Sacraments are duly administered, according to Christ’s ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.” *Article xix. of the Church of England.*

2. The scriptural passages adduced to prove the authority and infallibility of the church are inapplicable, and insufficient. They rest the theory of their claim on several prophetic descriptions of the gospel Church, promises made to it, and declarations of Christ to his disciples. The following are amongst those, on which most stress is laid: “ My spirit which is upon thee, “ and My words which I have put in thy mouth, “ shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of “ the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth “ of thy seed’s seed, from henceforth and for “ ever.” “ I will put my law in their inward “ parts, and write it in their hearts:—they shall “ all know me, from the least of them, to the “ greatest of them.” “ The Spirit of truth—“ will teach you all things—and will guide you “ into all truth.” “ Lo, I am with you always, “ even unto the end of the world.”*

Those persons must be deplorably ignorant of the language and connection of the Scriptures, or they must already have put their understandings, in fetters of other men’s imposing, who can discover this conclusion, in these premises. Some of the passages predict the calling of the Gentiles, some the conversion of the Jews, others the diffusion and influence of evangelical truth: some assure us of the inspiration which was necessary to enable the Apostles to fulfil their mission, and others declare the perpetual presence and power of Christ, in the preservation of his Church, in giving the means of knowledge and grace, in the conversion and sanctification of individuals, and in the ultimate prevalence of pure and practical

* Is. lix. 21. Jer. xxi. 13. John xiv. 15, 16, 26: Matt. xxviii. 20.—Also, Is. ii. 2—6. xxxv. 8. liv. 13. lx. lxii. Matt. xvi. 18. Luke x. 16. Eph. iv. 11—13, &c. &c.

religion :—but there is not a single passage of them all, on which an unbiassed man, of plain, good sense, and moderate biblical knowledge, could ever hang the monstrous dogma, that INFALLIBILITY in religious doctrines, should be the *certain, exclusive, and hereditary possession* of the Church of Rome.”*

A distinction generally obtains amongst the Romanists, between articles of *faith*, and articles of *discipline*. To this, they have recourse, when it is indisputably proved, that their infallible church has sanctioned by its authority at different periods, opposite and contradictory opinions. It is then acknowledged that the church may err in the one, but is absolutely incapable of erring with respect to the other. But it is a distinction assumed chiefly for the sake of hypothetical consistency and convenient defence—and more frequently employed, when reasoning against their opponents, than acted upon in their own internal arrangements. Such is the flexible and varying policy of the Church of Rome, that the principle of submission in cases of discipline, is itself easily shaped and moulded into an article of faith ; and the authority of the one, is transferred to the regulations of the other, when symptoms of rebellious inquiry commence their operations.

If the distinction, of which so much use is made, by the modern advocates of Popery, were practically regarded, toleration would be dis-

* See pp. 13—15. of “The reasons of the Protestant Religion.”—a Sermon lately published by the REV. JOHN PYE SMITH, D. D. I most cordially avail myself of this opportunity of recommending Dr. Smith’s Discourse, as a luminous, accurate, and comprehensive abstract of the principal arguments in support of the Protestant cause.

See further remarks on these inappropriate citations in the Appendix, NOTE D

played towards all who differ from them in ecclesiastical discipline, provided they agreed in the principles of faith. But the history of the Roman Church, has been for ages, where its power is predominant and uncontrolled, the history of intolerance! The demand of implicit faith, and absolute uniformity is incessantly made; and whatever may be their concessions and distinctions when contending with heretics, they are forgotten when secular power is incorporated with spiritual domination.

If by infallibility in matters of faith, is understood merely, the preservation of the Christian church, in every age, from essential and fundamental error, that error the admission and influence of which would invalidate the claim to be deemed Christians at all, then we have, instead of argument an identical proposition; and in effect they say nothing more than, that true Christians in every age have been true Christians! For the moment, a society, or an individual denominated *Christian*, adopts such errors, they are no longer entitled to the appellation. But what security does this afford to any church on earth, that they shall be *infallible*, on all the subjects of inquiry which are remotely or directly connected with the great principles of the Christian System, and which are capable of being formed into articles of faith? Where is the scriptural or historical proof of such infallibility? The support of such a claim, should not rest on doubtful and uncertain inference; it should not be left to ingenious construction, to find it out by the distortion of facts, the forced interpretation of figurative language, and the unnatural expansion of plain passages to a sense, which the unbiassed understanding of an impartial reader, would never discover; but it should be clearly, fairly, and

unequivocally asserted. I need not say that there is not a single declaration adduced on this subject, that would not, with equal reason, support the same pretensions on behalf of the Patriarch of Constantinople, or the Greek Church in Russia, or the reformed churches in Europe, or any individual Christian societies in the world, if they were sufficiently weak and arrogant to advance the claim !

3. If we consider the passages generally cited in order to support the infallibility of the Church, to be perfectly relevant and appropriate, it is yet to be proved that the Church of *Rome* possesses this exclusive authority. It is obviously not enough, for the argument as stated by their advocates, to shew that such power is committed to the Church, unless they can prove that the Church of Rome *alone and exclusively* is the Church of Christ. But where is the proof of such an identity? In what parts of the Old or New Testament is it recorded, or whence can it be gathered by fair implication, that the Church of the living God is nothing more or less than the Church of *Rome*? Priority of existence, a favourite subject of exultation to the members of this Church, will not support the application of these passages. The Council of Trent indeed, represents the Church of Rome as "*the Mother and Mistress of all Churches*":* but what an unscriptural representation! The Churches of *Jerusalem* and *Antioch* were formed before the Church of Roine. The first Church as to priority of existence, under the Christian economy, was the Church at Jerusalem. The Church of God, in the general and comprehensive sense of the term had been one continuous and unbroken

* Concil. Trident. Sess 24. Cap. 12.

society, under various dispensations. *Jerusalem* under the Mosaic economy was the scene peculiarly hallowed, as the residence of the Church, and as the place where God “delighted to dwell.” The boldness of Eastern imagery attributed to it the most exalted prerogatives, typical of the spiritual character and renewed dignity of the Church under the Christian dispensation. Jerusalem is called by the Apostle Paul, “the Mother of us all.” (Gal. iv. 26.) But this was not, as he expressly assures us, the “*Jerusalem in bondage*”—the mere local Jerusalem—the city whose inhabitants had rejected the Messiah, and who were then a tributary and enslaved people; but the spiritual Jerusalem, the “true circumcision,” or in other words, the FIRST Christian Church, formed in Jerusalem of those who received “the consolation of Israel,” and were converted to the faith. This primitive Church was “the Mother of us all.”—The gospel was *first* preached in Jerusalem, according to the command of our Lord after his resurrection, and in express fulfilment of those predictions which asserted that the “law should go out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from *Jerusalem*.” (Isa. ii. 3.) Hence, the Gentile churches were considered as *accessions* to the ancient Church commencing its new existence, its changed and perfected economy in the metropolis of Judea. In conformity with this representation, St. Paul compares the Gentiles, to “wild olives,” ingrafted into “a good olive-tree,” and describes the unbelieving Jews as “branches broken off,” while the ancient stock remained. The prophet Isaiah’s sublime predictions respecting the Gentiles, convey in a series of different allusions, the same idea of dependence and accession.

If then any particular church had been warranted in applying to itself the promises which

are applicable only to the Christian Church in general, as consisting of “the whole body of the faithful,” it would have been the Church of Jerusalem: and the advocates of such exclusive claims, might have urged—that Jerusalem was the scene of our Lord’s death and resurrection; that at Jerusalem the apostolic ministry was first exercised; that Jerusalem was expressly termed, a Mother Church; and that the Church at Antioch appealed to the Apostles at Jerusalem, on a question of peculiar importance to the interests of primitive Christianity. Had a fact, like this been related of the Church of Rome, how would its defenders have exulted in it, as an incontrovertible demonstration in their favour! But where do we find recorded in the New Testament the supremacy of one Church over another? Who does not perceive that the appeal from Antioch obtained a satisfactory decision, solely from the authority of the Apostles? It was their authority which rendered “the decree” binding on all the primitive Churches;* and this opinion accords with the uniform statements of Scripture, respecting the apostolic character. These accredited ambassadors of Christ, were the living oracles of the uni-

* It has sometimes been urged, that this was the first *council*. “But this notion,” observes the learned Mosheim, “arises from a manifest abuse of the word *council*. That meeting was only of one Church; and if such a meeting be called a *council*, it will follow that there were innumerable councils, in the primitive times. But every one knows that a *council* is an assembly of deputies, or commissioners sent from several Churches, associated by certain bonds in a general body; and therefore the supposition above-mentioned falls to the ground.” *Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 86. It may be added, that if this convention at Jerusalem, had been designed as a model and precedent for synodical jurisdiction, why did the decision, in consequence of an appeal from one Church, extend to all the Churches in Syria, Cilicia, Phrygia and Galatia? *Acts xv. 28. xvi. 4—6.* See Appendix. NOTE E.

versal Church. The visible proofs of a special commission were unequivocally displayed, to establish their testimony, and enforce obedience to their authority. On “the twelve foundations “ which have in them the names of the twelve “ Apostles of the Lamb,” the superstructure of the true Catholic Church is erected. Their authority still lives in their writings; and they are still truly infallible and oracular, in their decisions. They have revealed on every subject essential to faith and holiness, the will of “the faithful and true witness;” and “he that heareth them heareth Christ, and he that rejecteth them, rejecteth him that sent them.”

As *priority of date* will not support the pretensions of the Roman Church, neither will the *catholicity* for which they contend. The general or even the universal prevalence of an opinion is no proof of its truth. The utmost advantage secured by *this alone* is a presumption in its favour: but its legitimate claims to reception, must rest on far different grounds. Unless this be admitted, the first Christians could not have rationally supported their system of innovation on the belief and practice of the world; and Christian missionaries would still find insuperable objections in the *antiquity* and *catholicity* of idolatrous principles!

In the present case, however, the fact itself is against them; and though from an unwillingness to offend, we call them *Roman Catholics*, we can never admit their *exclusive* right to the term *Catholic*, because unquestionable facts are opposed to the assumption. As Churches existed before the Church of Rome, so Churches of contemporary date have all along existed with them.—The Greek Church, the Abyssinian Church, various Churches in Asia, and even the British Church have all existed without any connection

with the Church of Rome, or the slightest dependence upon it. Numerous Protestant Churches exist, in which, by the concessions of many Roman Catholic writers, there have been and still are real Christians; and in all these societies, those great principles of faith, which the Romanists acknowledge to be essential and fundamental, have been firmly and uniformly retained.* Admit in one instance the genuineness of personal religion, and the possibility of final salvation, within the pale of any of these communities—and the Roman Church is no longer *the Catholic Church*.—Deny that possibility—and the stigma of systematic intolerance is fixed upon it for ever!

The authority of the Romish Church is further supported by the opinion that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome. “The supremacy of St. Peter” will form the subject of a distinct lecture; and I shall therefore reserve for another opportunity, a minute investigation of this argument. I would however just observe on this topic,—that there is no evidence in the New Testament to prove that St. Peter was ever at Rome at all—that the proof from ecclesiastical tradition, that can be relied on, respects merely the circumstance of his death, as taking place at Rome—that there is not the shadow of authentic information, to shew that he ever resided or exercised his ministry there—and that the fact of his being one of “the pillars,” of the Church of Antioch (Gal. ii. 11.) gives a prior claim to the Christian Church in that place: if on such a circumstance, any claim like that of the Church of Rome, could be rationally and scripturally supported.

* See Dr. Buchanan's account of the Syrian Church in his “Christian Researches;” and Pinkerton's “Present state of the Greek Church in Russia.”

4. In the next place, it has never yet been *infallibly* determined, where this infallibility of the Church resides: whether it be in the body of the clergy in general; or in the clergy joined with the Pope, or in the Pope himself; or in a select convention of the clergy either separately or with 'his Holiness' at their head.—On all these points there is a considerable diversity of opinion among the advocates of infallibility. "The Pope's infallibility," says one writer, "is no article of faith, nor is it proposed by the Church as a condition of communion."* "Great numbers, of the most learned divines," observes another writer, of high authority in the Papal Church, "are of opinion, that —when the Head of the Church, emits any decree concerning faith or morals, to which he requires submission from all the faithful, in such a case, *he is himself infallible* in what he teaches; but there are others of a contrary opinion, who think that his decree is not to be considered as infallibly certain, *till the body of the bishops receive it*, either by their express approbation, or by their tacit submission to it, *by which it becomes a decree of the whole Church, whose infallibility is undoubted*. *This infallibility properly resides in the body of pastors joined with their head.*"†

"The question respecting the Pope's infallibility," says a third writer, "is a disputed point. The Catholic divines who have held it, have always confined his infallibility to those dogmatical decisions, which in quality of supreme Pastor of the Church, after due examination and discussion, he pronounces upon any controverted point of doctrine, canonically brought before him to be determined. *Whether these decisions, thus*

* Manners' Plain Account, &c. p. 19. † Bishop Hay's Sincere Christian. Vol. I. p. 172.

*given, be final, or subject to the judgment of the universal Church, are surely very harmless questions, which are frequently agitated in Catholic Schools.”**

I have cited these extracts, to shew on what an ambiguous and indeterminate principle the monstrous claim of infallibility is founded. If infallibility be worth any thing, it should be indisputably clear and evident, where it is to be found; otherwise of what imaginable use is it? What security can result from the assumption of a prerogative, if it remain a matter of question, “frequently agitated” amongst its advocates, where it resides? How is it possible to appeal with confidence to an unerring tribunal, if the “place of judgment” is unknown? It is truly amusing (if it be lawful to indulge such feelings, when contemplating the melancholy wanderings of the human mind on this subject,) to witness the evasion which is requisite, in order to a dextrous management of these special pleadings. Ask a Roman Catholic, what is the ultimate reason of his belief in any doctrine or fact of the Christian system—and he will reply, if consistent with his creed, NOT the assertions of Scripture, but the authority of the Church determining the sense of those assertions. Inquire, why he believes in the authority of the Church, and he will endeavour to prove its infallibility from the very book, the meaning of which he cannot understand, till that authority has interposed its oracular and infallible interpretations! Ask him,

* *Bossuet’s “Exposition of the doctrine of the Catholic Church.” P. 35. (Lately published at Manchester.)* The reader’s attention is particularly directed to some remarks in the Appendix (NOTE F.) on this republication of Bossuet’s Exposition; and on a preface by the Rev. John Lingard, to a similar pamphlet, lately published in Dublin.

on what is that infallibility founded—and he refers you to the supremacy of St. Peter, and tells you that Rome is the seat and centre of Catholic unity. Call in question, the infallibility of the Pope, and adduce the facts which prove that neither faith nor holiness have been the invariable attributes of these pretended successors of St. Peter; remind him of the revocation of edicts, the promulgation of opposite and contradictory anathemas, the intrigue and policy and secular principles which most of the Roman Pontiffs have displayed in their personal and official character; and he will gravely tell you, notwithstanding all he has said about the chair of St. Peter, and the claims of “God’s Vicar on earth,” that “the infallibility of the Pope is a harmless question often agitated in the Catholic Schools, and is not an article of *faith!*” Inquire again as to the place of this infallibility, and you are told, it belongs to *the universal Church*. Suggest, what very naturally presents itself as a difficulty to a reflecting mind, that it is impossible to convene the universal Church—that the phrase, if it have any definite and intelligible meaning attached to it, is applicable only to all the faithful that ever existed from the beginning of the world to the last day, or to all the Christians that exist at any one specific period; and that their opinion in reference to any disputed point cannot be ascertained: suggest this difficulty, and you are told that the whole is made up of a part—that the universal Church, the church to which all these prerogatives belong, consists only of a few of *the bishops of one Church, convened together with the Pope at their head!* It is still further objected, that by previous concessions, infallibility does not belong to the Head of this convention; that of course it cannot be claimed by any individual

member of it ; and that it is therefore yet to be explained, how infallibility can be possessed by a combination of persons, who are acknowledged to be separately and individually liable to err ! If it be asked, by what occult causes, or mysterious process, this infallibility can belong to a number of fallible men, the moment they are convened together—you are then referred to the promises made to the Apostles : but when by a series of arguments, deduced from the New Testament, it is clearly made out, that the Apostles were *individually* as well as *collectively*, the oracular and authoritative guides of the Church, during their personal ministry—that no proof whatever can be derived from the records of Scripture, of their appointing any successors in the peculiar office they sustained—and that pretensions to a similar authority are altogether gratuitous and unsupported ; and the only reply is, that a different interpretation is affixed to these declarations of Scripture, and has always been the sense of the Church on the subject ! Thus do the advocates of infallibility for ever reason in a circle ; if such circuitous and declamatory assertions be at all entitled to the name of reasoning. They prove the authority of the Church from its infallibility, and the infallibility of the Church from its authority, while both are “baseless as the fabric of a vision.”

5. The claim of infallibility is altogether unsupported by scriptural analogy. The Church of God existed for four thousand years under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations ; but was that *Church* at any one period infallible ? “Holy, men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ;” and their official instructions possessed oracular authority. Authority is still attached to them, on account of the “infallible

proofs" of their divine inspiration; and the authentic record of those instructions sustains the same relation to us, which the oral enunciation of them did to those, to whom they were primarily delivered. But though *inspired* men were infallible, those who directed the administration of the judicial and ceremonial laws of the Mosaic economy and were *not inspired*, never pretended to infallibility. It was reserved for another age and another Church, with far less pretensions in their favour, to rear the mighty structure of supreme and exclusive authority over the reason, the consciences, and the faith of the world!

There is one passage respecting the judicial administration of the Israelites, which has been frequently pressed into the service of the Romish Church; but it is so far from furnishing an analogical argument in support of their reasonings, that it is a most decisive refutation of them. It is recorded in Deuteronomy xvii. 8—10. "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment—thou shalt come unto the Priests, the Levites, and unto the Judge that shall be in those days; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment, and thou shalt do, according to the sentence which they shall shew thee," &c. "This law," observes a judicious expositor of Scripture, "was addressed to the magistrates in the different parts of the land, before mentioned. (Chap. xvi. 18.) In many cases of life and death, or of property, or concerning the law of retaliation, they might find perplexing difficulties. Such causes were therefore to be referred to the decision of the superior tribunals, which were held at the place, where the tabernacle was fixed. The Priests and Levites, having the most leisure, and being specially appointed to the study of the law, which was not only the

rule of conscience, but likewise the law of the land, by their learning would be best qualified to act as judges ; and probably the Sanhedrim, and other superior courts of justice were chiefly composed of them, though not without some persons of the other tribes. The judge here mentioned, may mean, either the High Priest, or such other supreme magistrate, as God from time to time should raise up among them. To these the appeal was to be made ; and with all their advantages, it was not likely they would give a false sentence, whilst they continued free from gross apostacy in religion, and corruption in morals.—This law however, related *not to matters of faith and conscience, but merely to the administration of justice in the land* ;—it therefore gives no countenance to the monstrous claim which some have made of being absolute interpreters of doctrines and precepts, in matters of conscience, to which all ought to submit, though their decisions contradict the word of God ! In this case, it suffices us to say—“we must obey” and believe “God rather than man ;” as Peter replied to the successors of those very persons, to whom this authority was originally given, and on whom it had, at that time devolved.”* I might add, if this law had conferred an infallible authority on the decisions of the Jewish court, then it will follow, that they were right in their rejection of Jesus Christ and his new religion ! But if the High Priest, and the Sanhedrim, neither possessed this authority nor pretended to it, what must we think of those, who lay claim to infallibility, under a dispensation of a pure and spiritual character—a dispensation “not of this world”—and one, in which the principles of faith have ac-

* Scott's Exposition—in loco.

quired an expansion and an authority, which they could not have possessed, under the imperfect and introductory economy of the law? If under that economy, there was no occasion for human interference, in matters of faith and conscience; and *written Revelation* was the only infallible guide: how can such an interference be necessary *now*, when the sacred rule is *enlarged, confirmed* and *completed* by Christ and his commissioned disciples?

6. But I remark finally, that the claims of the Church of Rome are in direct opposition to the declarations of Scripture, concerning its own sufficiency. The prophets invariably referred to no authority except their own inspired instructions, which were afterwards recorded, and the recorded instructions of their predecessors in the prophetic office. When Isaiah reproved the Jews, for regarding the oracles of imposture, he asserted most explicitly, the supreme authority of written Revelation. “To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because, there is no light in them.” (Isai. viii. 20.) Hence, the numerous injunctions to the study of the divine word, in every part of the Old Testament. Hence, our Lord’s exhortation to “search the Scriptures;” his ascribing the errors of the Sadducees, to their “not knowing the Scriptures;” his constant appeal to “the law and the prophets,” while he expressly disclaimed, and condemned the “tradition of the elders!” Most punctually did he observe all the moral and ceremonial obligations of the Mosaic economy; but where do we find him acknowledging the authority of any ecclesiastical tribunal in matters of faith and conscience? On the contrary, when describing the principles on which *his* religion should be conducted, how frequently did he remind his dis-

ciples that HE ALONE was their MASTER and their LORD! (Matt. xxiii. 8—10.) He therefore represents their authority in the Church as merely delegated—as derived solely from himself—and as vested exclusively in them. On this account, their instructions and writings possessed the same authority in the primitive Church, which the writings of Moses and the Prophets possessed under the preceding dispensation.

On the perfection and sufficiency of Scripture, there is one remarkably decisive passage in the second epistle of St. Paul to Timothy : (iii. 16, 17.) “ All Scripture is given by inspiration of “ God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, “ for correction, for instruction in righteousness, “ that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly “ furnished unto all good works.” This refers in the first instance, to the Jewish Scriptures ; but it involves in it, a principle of peculiar importance in the present inquiry. It most distinctly asserts *the sufficiency of inspired writings for all the purposes of moral and religious instruction.* It cannot in the slightest degree affect this view of the passage, to object that it relates to the Old Testament : for if this were true of that part of the sacred volume, in reference to those who had no other Scriptures, the argument must possess an accumulation of force, under the Christian economy. It was no doubt intended by the Apostle to apply to all successive portions of the inspired code. At the time when this letter was written to Timothy, many parts of the New Testament were in circulation among the primitive churches. And in that well known passage in the second epistle of Peter, concerning, the writings of Paul, we find those writings distinctly acknowledged as a part of the sacred canon: the unlearned and unstable are accused of wresting

the mysterious passages, “as they do *the other Scriptures*”—(ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς. 2 Pet. iii. 16.)

On this principle we can account for the commendation pronounced by the Evangelist Luke, on the Bereans, who “searched the Scriptures daily,” to ascertain whether even an apostolic testimony accorded with them or not. (Acts xvii. 11.) From this single fact, we are clearly warranted to infer, that the Scriptures then existing, were deemed authoritative; that the Apostles and first Christians appealed to them as such, in their inquiries; and that if the authority of Apostles was subject to the authority of that Revelation, which then existed, the authority of the Church in every age, ought to be subject to the authority of Scripture. No Church can pretend to be greater in authority, than the Apostles; but if the Apostles acknowledged the authority of the written Scriptures, then every Church should acknowledge it too.

But it is replied—‘the authority of the Scripture among the primitive Christians, did not prevent their subjection to the Apostolic interpretation of Scripture, as equally authoritative with the Scripture itself—nor did it affect their reception of those principles, that depended *solely* on the testimony of Apostles.’ This we cheerfully concede, but we deny the inference drawn from it by the Romanists, that the Scripture is not the *sole* and *exclusive* rule of faith and practice; and for this obvious reason, that no Church on earth possesses those *proofs* and *marks* of authority, which the Apostles so clearly and unequivocally exhibited; and because, from their own concessions, the canon of Scripture was completed by them. The Apostles not merely asserted, as the Church of Rome has done, but proved by a series of unquestionable facts, their claims to subjec-

tion: though with all these divine attestations in their favour—their mildness, their humility, their opposition to every secular principle, their solemn renunciation of all force and compulsion, in enforcing obedience to their mandates, and their uniform simplicity and spirituality, present a striking contrast to the worldly maxims, the haughty domination, the arrogant impositions, the irrational dogmatising, and the ferocious intolerance, which have been sanctioned and displayed by the Church of Rome. The Apostles not only wrought miracles, but communicated the power of working them. They exhibited the signs of a divine commission; nor were those signs obscure, unintelligible and of doubtful import. It required no circuitous argumentation to prove their claims. An appeal was made to the senses, as well as the reason of mankind; and the seal of heaven was visibly affixed to their credentials.*

It might be expected, if the Christian economy had required in its progress, as well as in its origin, *a living, oracular and authoritative tribunal*, by which all matters pertaining to faith and conscience, were to be infallibly determined, that there should be some allusion to an ecclesiastical provision for this purpose, in the inspired writings of the Apostles; that its jurisdiction should be specified, and its extent of authority defined; that the Church or association to be invested with this dread responsibility, should be clearly described, so as to leave no doubt on the mind of one, anxious to ascertain the plain unequivocal sense of Scripture on the subject. The evidence of such an authority being appointed for the future government of the Church, ought to resemble in its certainty and distinctness that, by

* Some observations on the pretended miracles of the Church of Rome, will be found in the Appendix. NOTE G.

which the Apostolic claims are supported, if it were intended like theirs, to be infallible and decisive. The New Testament, however, gives us no intimations whatever on this subject; it assures us only of the perpetuity of the Christian cause, and the spiritual presence of the Saviour with all his true disciples. It does not contain A SINGLE TEXT concerning ‘apostolic succession’—the ‘centre and seat of Catholic unity’—‘the prerogatives of the See of St. Peter,’ or ‘the infallibility’ of any uninspired men, or set of men in any part of the Christian world. On all these points, it affords us no instruction; and the advocates of the Roman hierarchy must have recourse to other sources of information and authority.

Combining the arguments involved in these reasonings and illustrations, I conceive they will support the following important deductions.

FIRST, That the authority claimed by the Church of Rome invalidates the unalienable right of private judgment, and secures no advantages that are not far more efficiently and safely provided for, without the admission of that authority. I am aware that the Romanists, invariably deny the right of private judgment. On no subject, do we meet with more frequent declamation. It is represented as the frightful offspring of scepticism, and the prolific parent of “false doctrine, heresy and schism.” And yet declaim as they may, they are often compelled to admit that right, and to act upon it. The previous question concerning the divine authority of the Christian religion, cannot be entered into, or determined, without it. The very act of disputation involves the admission of the right, whether that disputation respect the doctrines or the government of the Church. The Apostles never denied

it. It was abused and perverted even under their personal instructions, as much as it has been since their writings have been the only guides of the Church. At that period, as we might expect where the right of individual judgment is admitted, while the exercise of that right belongs to erring and imperfect beings—there were occasional irregularities—“debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults.” (2 Cor. xii. 20.) Could the Council of Trent have drawn a more lively portraiture of its evils? But does the Apostle on this account tell the Corinthians, that henceforward, they must never think for themselves—that they must abandon the right of judgment—and submit with implicit deference to their uninspired teachers? He gives no such directions for healing the disorders of the Church! He asserts indeed his own Apostolic authority, but to no other, as an ultimate authority, do we find the slightest appeal. On the contrary, addressing these Corinthians, he says on another occasion—“Judge ye what I say!” (1 Cor. x. 15.) He exhorts the Thessalonians to “prove all things,” or *bring them to the test*; (*παντα δοκιμάζετε.* 1 Thess. v. 21.) and clearly asserts, not only the right, but the duty of individual inquiry. The last cited passage implies, the previous existence of a test or standard, known and acknowledged at that time; or otherwise, how could there be any proof or trial at all? It further implies, that the test was intelligible and accessible; and that no instances of erroneous construction in the use of it, could at all supersede the obligation to regard it, for the purposes for which it was designed. With this exhortation accords also that of St. John—“try the spirits, whether they be of God.” (1 John iv. 1.)

If there be any right, the principles of which

approve themselves to the unbiassed dictates of a reflecting mind—any right, the denial of which, would at once excite the suspicion of collusion and imposture—any right, with which the operation of force and the authority of human enactments ought not to interfere, and for the best of all reasons, because they cannot in the nature of things produce conviction—it is the right of free inquiry in matters of religion. The genius of Christianity supports it. Nothing was “done in a corner” by its first advocates. They submitted all its principles to unfettered and universal investigation. They “commended themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”*

* The following remarkable passages, are taken from the “Homilies,” of the eloquent *Chrysostom*, Bishop of Constantinople, towards the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. “All Christians ought to have recourse to the Scriptures. For at this time, since heresy has infected the Churches, “the divine Scriptures alone can afford a proof of genuine Christianity, and a refuge to those who are desirous of arriving at “the true faith. Formerly it might have been ascertained by “various means, which was the true Church—but at present “there is no other method left to those who are willing to discover the true Church of Christ, but *by the Scriptures alone*. “And why? Because heresy has all outward observances in common with her. If a man therefore be desirous of knowing “the true Church, how will he be able to do it, amidst so great a “resemblance, but by the Scriptures alone? Wherefore, our “Lord foreseeing, that such a great confusion of things would “take place in the latter days, orders the Christians—to have recourse to nothing but the Scriptures.” (*Hom. 49. in Matt. c. 24.*) Again (on 2nd. *Corinth*: Hom. 13.) he says, “Let us not “attend to the opinions of the many; but let us inquire into the “things themselves. For it is absurd, while we will not trust “other people in pecuniary affairs, but chuse to reckon and calculate for ourselves, *that in matters of far greater consequence, we should implicitly follow the opinions of others; especially as we possess the MOST EXACT AND PERFECT RULE AND STANDARD, by which to regulate our several inquiries—I mean the regulations of THE DIVINE LAWS.* Therefore I “could wish that all of you would neglect what this or that man “asserts for truth, and that you would investigate all these things “in the Scriptures.”

Nor can it be proved, that any advantages result from denying the right of inquiry, and demanding this transfer of individual responsibility to an ecclesiastical convention. *Unity* and *uniformity* have been the idols set up in all ages, by the advocates of infallibility. They are confessedly desirable: and measures of a conciliating and comprehensive nature, that might tend to bring into closer and more intimate association, "the sheep of Christ, which are scattered abroad," ought to be seriously investigated; and if accordant with the purity of Christian truth, should be universally adopted. But here the question on which the present argument depends, naturally suggests itself.—Is the Church of Rome the **SOLE AND EXCLUSIVE JUDGE** on this intricate point? Must the laws devised and enacted by the wisdom and authority of that Church, be received without inquiry—without hesitation? Its advocates say, they should—we ask, for what reasons; and on assuring them, when those reasons are stated, that they do not produce in our minds, any rational and satisfactory conviction, they then deny the right of investigation! We remind them of the perfection and sufficiency of the sacred oracles; and again ask in what part of those oracles it is recorded, that any combination of uninspired men, should be authorised in the name of Jesus Christ, to demand implicit, unhesitating and universal submission, in matters of faith and conscience? When such glaring inadequacy of proof must be obvious to every unbiassed inquirer, it is an admirable contrivance, to call in question the right of inquiry! The denial of that right, must naturally awaken the suspicion, that all rational modes of proof are wanting, or so desperate an expedient would not be adopted. Certainly, no method is so con-

ducive to implicit dependence, and so favourable to the perfection of unity as not to think at all ; or to allow those who demand this unity of sentiment, to think for them !

But, with all their boasting of unity, they are divided and separated, as well as their Protestant neighbours. There is indeed a visible and external communion, and the authority of the See of Rome, like the key-stone of an arch, binds the whole mass together. It is the "seat and centre of their unity"—but what kind of unity ? A unity that is merely artificial and mechanical—a unity secured by the observance of the same ceremonies, and the use of the same ritual—a unity resulting in innumerable instances from accident, custom, and authority—the unity of a military corps who perform the same evolutions, go through the same manœuvres, and move together with admirable order. But is this "the unity of the spirit?" Who does not perceive that in religious matters, that unity alone deserves the name, which is the result of inquiry and conviction ? The unity of which inspired writers speak, is essentially, an agreement in principle—in disposition—in sentiment—in character :—the fellowship of kindred minds—the coincidence of thought and feeling on matters of infinite interest and importance. It is an intellectual—a moral—a spiritual unity. To secure its operation, an absolute uniformity is by no means essentially requisite : and if our opponents avail themselves of this remark to account for, and explain their own differences, we reply—that if the divisions obtaining amongst Protestants, are no more effectual barriers to true unity than the divisions obtaining in the Church of Rome, then no superior advantage in point of unity is possessed by those in its communion. That there are divi-

sions amongst them is most notorious. They are divided on the question of infallibility: and if any question might be termed fundamental, one would think, it must be that, concerning the authority which is to determine what is fundamental. But so far from being united, they differ materially on this primary question; and many of the controversies, which under other names have divided Protestant Churches, have been for ages discussed in the Church of Rome, and have formed the barriers of separation between opposite and contending parties.*

It is sometimes contended, that an inquirer after truth, by reposing with unlimited confidence, in the directions and interpretations of an infallible Church, is likely to feel more *certainty* and *satisfaction*, than if he relied on his own conclusions, respecting the sacred volume. This consciousness of certainty, is the frequent theme of popular declamation; and is often rhetorically contrasted, with the doubts, and hesitations, and sceptical leanings, as they are represented, of a Protestant inquirer. It is granted that an indolent mind is by this expedient well supplied with reasons for full and unqualified submission, and the trouble of investigation is most conveniently saved. But let us examine more closely this pretended certainty, or consciousness of certainty, peculiar to the disciples of the Roman Hierarchy. They cannot surely persuade themselves, that it is the result of divine inspiration. It must then have been arrived at, either in the way of rational inquiry, or without any inquiry at all, on the bare assertion of those who were the means of produc-

* It is well known that the famous Cardinal Bellarmine was a most strenuous advocate, for the exclusive infallibility of the Pope. Some historical illustrations of other divisions in the Roman Catholic Church, will be found in the Appendix. NOTE H.

ing it. If it were obtained rationally, there must have been a series of inquiries; and those inquiries must have been conducted (if they were rational) according to some acknowledged and existing rule. But in such a process of mental operations, that very private judgment, so much condemned, must have been exercised—in other words, the individual must have judged for himself, and availed himself of the right of private judgment, in determining henceforward, to abandon his judgment to the decisions of the Church of Rome! All the uncertainty then, which is alleged to be the necessary consequence of private judgment in religion, belongs as much to the Roman Catholic, if he be a rational inquirer as to the schismatical Protestant. On the other hand, if there were no inquiry, and the whole system of principles and institutions has been received without any investigation at all, then we are perfectly willing to allow them all the credit, which can possibly arise from such instances of enlightened acquiescence! They are truly honourable illustrations of the genius and tendency of their religion!*

It may be objected that there are thousands amongst Protestants who receive their religion without inquiry. This is granted—but it is not the natural and legitimate consequence of their principles, but in direct opposition to them. In the one case, the operation of various causes will

* It was therefore with admirable consistency that Bellarmine seriously extolled the faith of the collier. This well known instance of implicit faith, is thus related by Dr. Campbell. An ignorant collier, when asked what it was he believed, answered, "I believe what the Church believes." The other rejoined, "What then does the Church believe?" He replied readily, "The Church believes what I believe." The other desirous if possible, to bring him to particulars, once more resumed his inquiry; "Tell me then, I pray you, What is it, which you and the Church both believe?" The only answer the collier could give was, "Why truly, Sir, the

account for, though it will by no means justify, the want of inquiry ; in the other, the disposition to inquire is proscribed and condemned, and the perfection of faith is made to consist in the renunciation of reason.* But I observe,

SECONDLY, and *finally*, That the authority claimed by the Church of Rome, is directly subversive of that regard which is due to the oracles of Revelation. It naturally diverts the attention of men to other sources of information. It is a reflection on the wisdom of their author, to assert that a volume, possessing all the claims of a divine and heavenly origin, is unintelligible, till uninspired men, have affixed to it their interpretation ! And after all, are not their interpretations as liable to be misunderstood as the declarations of Scripture ? To have secured the proper uses and ends of infallibility they should contend for the infallibility of all in their communion. Provision should have been made, that no possible misconception could arise respecting the decrees of councils and the “dogmatical determinations” of Popes ; and then the miracle of infallibility would have been complete ! †

It is natural to inquire, for what purposes the Almighty revealed his will to the world, if it be not an intelligible revelation. If the Scriptures have no determinate meaning; till the Church

Church and I both—believe the same thing.” (*Lectures*, Vol. ii. p. 259.) The ignorance of the collier is not so marvellous, as the approbation pronounced by Roman Catholic ascetics on this act of credulity.

See Bellarmine. *De arte bene moriendi*, Lib 2. Cap. 9.

* Appendix. NOTE I.

† It would be quite as easy to prove the infallibility of each individual member of the Roman Church, whether a layman or a Priest, as the infallibility of Popes or Councils, on the principles which support their reasonings on this subject. For it might be asked, were not the promises made to *individual* believers ? May

fixes one, why were they committed to writing at all? A far more summary and satisfactory procedure would have been, to have secured the constant and successive proof of divine inspiration on the part of Popes and Councils. On the other hand, if " holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and if the Scriptures are " able to make us wise to salvation,"—then it is our individual duty to " search the Scriptures" for ourselves; to implore that guidance and direction for the right understanding of them, which God has promised to impart; and to acknowledge no other authority but this divine and truly infallible standard. " What is the chaff to the wheat?" " Let God be true but every man a liar!"

I am far from supposing that every part of the Scripture is alike and equally intelligible. It is most freely confessed, that, they contain the sublimest mysteries, as well as the simplest statements; that while the " way-faring man" may understand all that is essential to faith and holiness, the most profound and penetrating mind may be unable to comprehend all their declarations. I am not surprised at the analogy which may be traced in various points, between the word and the works of the Almighty. I feel thankful therefore for the institution of the Christian ministry, which is designed to explain, en-

not *all* the faithful appropriate to themselves such declarations as these—" He shall teach you all things"—" Ye have an unction from the Holy one, and know all things," &c. These are certainly as decisive proofs of *individual infallibility*, as any declarations cited by the advocates of the Roman Church, to support their notions of infallibility! Nay, on their principles any individual might contend for his own *exclusive infallibility*; and demand implicit unhesitating submission to his own opinions, if such an one could be found, with a competent measure of confidence and presumption, to advance the claim!

force, and apply to the characters and consciences of men, the discoveries of Revelation. But while "I magnify my office," and adore the wisdom of him who appointed it, never be it forgotten, my Christian friends, that the sacred volume is the **ONLY RULE AND REASON OF YOUR FAITH.** Bring to this test, as your ultimate appeal, all the explanations and arguments that are brought before you. Examine for yourselves. Remember your individual responsibility. God has not instituted the "ministry of reconciliation," to supersede your own inquiries. Never do you confer higher honour on our instructions than when they lead you to the better understanding of the word of God, and to a more habitual and exclusive deference to its supreme authority. Never do you more awfully degrade and pervert the design of that sacred office, I sustain, than when you receive implicitly without thought, and without examination, the sentiments which you are accustomed to hear defended and explained. Remember that religion is a "reasonable service." It is the illumination of the mind, the conviction of the judgment, the rational, voluntary and decided consecration of the heart to spiritual and divine objects. Christians are "not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Christian education, ritual ceremonies, external observances, and ministerial instructions, are only the moral machinery of religion; and whatever may be pleaded in their defence as subservient to the interests of piety, they can never produce by their own influence, any radical impressions on the heart—any permanent renovation of the conscience and the character. This is effected solely through the instrumental agency of divine truth, by the efficient power of the Holy Spirit. Even that

sacred truth, the truth of the Gospel, the truth revealed in the Scriptures concerning JESUS CHRIST AS THE ONLY SAVIOUR, can produce this important end, only so far as it is understood and received. Hence the absolute necessity of scriptural knowledge. Hence the accumulation of proof in favour of the divine origin of the Scriptures, derived from the experience of Christians in all ages, attesting its power and effect on the human heart! "The entrance of this word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." It is "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit—and, is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Let it be established as a settled principle in your belief, as a kind of axiom in your religion, that whatever opinion or system of opinions, tends directly or indirectly to diminish the authority of the sacred volume, to lower the estimate of its importance, and to produce as its natural result, any practical disregard to its directions, is most unquestionably erroneous, anti-scriptural, and pernicious: whether it be the boasted sufficiency of reason, or the self-constituted, arbitrary, and dogmatical power of an ecclesiastical tribunal.

Be thankful, Christians, for that immense variety of evidence, which irradiates by its splendour, and invests with its authority, this holy book. Let your faith stand, "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Exercise vigilant caution, and fervent prayer for divine teaching, in all your religious inquiries. "EVERY ONE OF US SHALL GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD." The cares, anxieties, and occupations of life, will form no excuse for your indifference at the divine tribunal. You will then be judged, not according to the decrees and decisions of fallible

46 ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

mortals, like yourselves, but "according to all
"the things which are written in this book." This
book, which God has revealed as the only guide
of faith, and the only rule of conduct, will be the
test, by which your individual characters will be
ascertained, and your eternal destiny determined.
In the anticipation of that day, let all your senti-
ments be formed, and all your actions regulated.
Rejoice that you live at a time when the supreme
and exclusive authority of the Scriptures is gene-
rally acknowledged, and in a country where the
sacred rights of conscience are revered and pro-
tected. May these privileges never be abused and
perverted! "Take heed what ye hear: with
"what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to
"you, and unto you that hear, shall more be
"given. For he that hath, to him shall be given;
"and he that hath not, from him shall be taken
"even that which he hath." (Mark iv. 24, 25.)

LECTURE II.

ON ORAL TRADITION.

THE first discoveries of divine Revelation were communicated to the Patriarchs. By various methods, and in successive portions, the will of God was made known, and the designs of his mercy were gradually unfolded to the world. A long period intervened between the times of Adam and Moses; but during the whole of that period, the memory of divine communications was preserved by oral tradition. Before the introduction of alphabetical writing, of which we have no authentic proof, prior to the date of the Pentateuch, this must have been the principal if not the only method, of transmitting from age to age, the remembrance of important transactions. It might naturally be expected that the progress of time would increase the sources of corruption, and mingle the fictions of human fancy, with the communications of sacred truth. The early history of all ancient nations is involved in doubt and obscurity; and the darkness which envelopes their origin, must be ascribed to the uncertainties of verbal relation.

Various causes were combined in their operation, to preserve even by this conveyance, the comparative purity of divine Revelation in the first

ages of the world. Owing to the longevity of the Patriarchs, not more than seven or eight individuals were necessary to its preservation, from the death of Adam to the beginning of the Mosaic economy. The torch of heavenly truth required not a more frequent succession to bear it on high, and to irradiate the gloom of moral darkness that pervaded the world. Such also were the pastoral habits, the simple manners, and the religious authority of the venerable Patriarchs, over their direct and collateral descendants, that greater security was thereby afforded for the more faithful transmission of those principles and institutions, which constituted the Patriarchal religion. In addition to all these natural causes of the purity of tradition, there were special interpositions of divine providence for this purpose. A particular family was selected in the wise arrangements of the Almighty, to be the depositaries of Revelation; and a series of remarkable events occurred, to define their limits, to separate them from the rest of mankind, to invest them with singular prerogatives for receiving and communicating the will of God, and to mark them out, as in every respect "a peculiar people."

In the natural course of human affairs, this family became extended and multiplied, and blended with a people of idolatrous principles and practices. The average duration of life was contracted to "three-score years and ten;" an entire revolution had taken place in their social habits and occupations: and if at this period a new economy had not commenced, the traditions of the Patriarchs would soon have been lost amidst "things forgotten," or exchanged for the opinions and rites of their oppressive tyrants. The state of things was such, that the former methods of perpetuating the divine will would have been

altogether inadequate to their altered condition; and another dispensation was requisite to secure not only the purity, but the existence of religion.

At this eventful period Moses was raised up, to deliver his enslaved brethren "from the land of Egypt and the house of bondage;" to conduct the tribes of Israel to the promised land; and to promulgate those laws by which their personal conduct, their relative behaviour, and their whole civil and ecclesiastical polity should be regulated. But what was the method this divine legislator employed, to give permanence and perpetuity to his injunctions? It was no longer left to oral tradition, to convey from age to age, the revelation of the will of heaven. Nor were the doubtful and obscure hieroglyphics of the Egyptian priesthood employed as a substitute for the former mode of communication. This plan might have admirably suited the designs of an ambitious and intriguing hierarchy, and have supported any scheme which intolerance or imposture might have devised. It was the will of God however, that all the people should understand both the principles and institutions of the new economy. *For this purpose the oracles of God were committed to writing.* "This important æra in the divine dispensations ought ever to be remembered with gratitude and joy. Without inquiring whether the writing of the Ten Commandments with the finger of God was the origin of letters, and the model to mankind of alphabetical writing, or whether the books of Moses were the first in the world, we may safely affirm, that writing was then made, and has ever since continued to be, the means which God has appointed and blessed, for perpetuating the memory of his wonderful purposes and dispensations in behalf of his people."

" How completely are the Jews distinguished from all other nations, by the authentic history which they possess of their origin, and of the most remarkable events of their subsequent progress, as well as by the predictions which regard their future lot! If, indeed, the revelations of God had not been thus secured, the means of religious knowledge would soon have been inferior to those of the knowledge of ordinary affairs. For no sooner did writing become generally known, than it was used for records of every kind; and how strange would it have been if the fables and crimes and speculations of heathens had been thus transmitted to after ages, while the history, the laws, and the oracles of the sacred nation had no other monument than a transient and treacherous succession of impressions on the human memory—no other channel of communication than the fleeting sounds of the human voice! Miracles could, indeed, preserve any thing, in any way; but God works not miracles without a suitable occasion. The books of Moses have accordingly transmitted all the oral traditions of the Patriarchs, which it was the will of God to preserve; and none of the sacred books acknowledge any oral traditions of posterior date."*

There were, however, pretended traditions to which the ancient Pharisees had recourse, in order to support their false principles, and unnatural interpretations of the written law. Thus they virtually set aside the authority of the Old Testament, by the deference they paid to oral expositions of the law of Moses. They claimed

* " Essays on the authority, the scope and the consummation of the Law and the Prophets." By the REV. GREVILLE EWING, of Glasgow. Vol. I. pp. 8, 9.

for them, the authority of the inspired legislator himself; and it is asserted by modern Jews, that they were communicated privately by Moses, and preserved in succeeding ages, by the ordinary methods of oral transmission; till in the second century of the Christian era, they were committed to writing, for their more faithful preservation.*

Whatever may be the complexion of Jewish reasonings in defence of their traditions, it is enough for us *as Christians*, to know, that they were altogether disclaimed and condemned by our infallible legislator. On no subject do we find our Lord more explicit in his censures and reproofs. He enters on one occasion, into a minute detail of arguments and facts—appeals to the reason and consciences, and feelings of his hearers—and exposes with admirable force, and

* This was accomplished by the famous *Rabbi Judas the Holy*, about A.D. 180. This eminent doctor of the law was born at *Sephoris*, a city in Galilee. He acquired great reputation in his profession, and was employed in composing differences, and deciding disputes amongst the Jews, concerning the sense of the law. Apprehending great danger from the dispersion of his countrymen, and fearing that they might recede from the tradition of *their Fathers*, he thought it better to reduce them to writing, than to confide in their memories any longer! Hence he composed what is called the *Mishna*, containing the code of their civil and canon laws. [See *Calmet*. art: *Mishna*, and *Tradition*; and *Prideaux's Connections*. Vol. iii. B. v. p. 404—405.] It must occur to every reflecting reader, how much wiser Rabbi Judas was than Moses!! What difficulties would have been prevented, and what advantages secured, if this measure of prospective policy had been adopted by the legislator himself! It was also a proof of Ezra's inattention, that he did not think of composing the *Mishna*! I feel peculiar pleasure in again referring the reader to the “Essays” of Mr. Ewing on the Jewish controversy, for a convincing refutation of the Pharisaic heresy. (Vol. I. Essay ii.) Every argument on this subject, applies with an amazing accumulation of force, to the apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions of the Roman Church—the *Mishna* of Popery.

in most impressive appeals and denunciations, the folly, absurdity, partiality, and iniquity of these pretended traditions. (Matt. xxii. 1—26. Mark vii. 1—13.) There is no reserve or palliation in this exposure. The very principle is condemned, on the evident implication of the sufficiency of Scripture: and the Pharisees are directly accused of “MAKING THE WORD OF GOD OF NONE EFFECT THROUGH THEIR TRADITION.”

With such records before us, it is impossible on any rational grounds, to avoid the conclusion, that under the Christian economy, *there is the strongest presumptive argument against any doctrine or injunction that derives its authority solely from unwritten tradition.* Even before we examine the tradition itself, or ascertain whether it be consistent or inconsistent with the New Testament, it becomes us to look at it with suspicion and distrust. If it relate to any principle or practice, which it is of importance for us to be acquainted with, we may conclude from the reasonings of our Lord, from the argument of analogy, from the authority possessed by the Apostles, and from the design of Revelation, that such principles or practices would be distinctly specified and explained in the sacred volume. But if they be not thus stated and explained; if the matter in question depend solely on the imaginary authority of tradition, we are fully warranted in concluding, that it is not of essential importance for us to know it—that no obligation attaches to it—and that all attempts to impose it on the faith and consciences of men, are an unscriptural and impious usurpation of that authority, which is the exclusive prerogative of an inspired instructor.

I need not inform you, my friends, that evident and satisfactory as these reasonings appear, and

incorporated as they are, with all our habits of thinking on religious subjects, they are systematically opposed to the principle maintained by the Church of Rome on the authority of oral tradition. That principle assumes the fact that many instructions were delivered by the Apostles to the primitive Christians, which were not committed to writing; that these unwritten instructions have been preserved by the Church of Rome; and that the authority of these unwritten instructions, thus preserved by traditionary communication, is equal to the authority of their recorded instructions, in the volume of inspiration. That this is an accurate account of the doctrine of the Romish Church will appear from the following citation.

"The Papist truly represented," says Gother, one of their ablest advocates, "believes that no divine faith ought to be given to any thing but what is of divine revelation; and that nothing is to have place in his creed, but what was taught by Christ and his Apostles, *and has been delivered and taught in all ages by the Church of God, the congregation of all true believers, and has been so delivered down to him, through all ages.* But now, whether, that which has been so delivered down to him, as the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, has been *by word of mouth or writing* is altogether indifferent to him; he being ready to follow in this point, as in all others, the command of St. Paul, that is to 'stand fast and hold the tradition he has learned whether by word or epistle.' So that as he undoubtedly holds the whole Bible to be the word of God, because in all ages it has been so taught, preached, believed, and delivered successively to the faithful; although they are not, nor have at any time been able to prove what

" they have thus taught and delivered by one text
" of Scripture ; in the like manner, he is ready to
" receive and believe all, this same congregation
" has, *together with the Bible*, in all ages, suc-
" cessively, without interruption taught, preach-
" ed, believed, and delivered as the doctrine of
" Christ and his Apostles ; and assents to it with
" divine faith ; just as he does to the Bible, *and*
" *esteems any one anathema*, that shall preach
" otherwise than he has thus received."*

In this passage, which contains an ample and intelligible explanation of the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church respecting oral tradition, there are several fallacies peculiarly demanding our attention. I shall endeavour briefly to expose and confute them, before I illustrate the general arguments which invalidate this precarious support of ecclesiastical authority.

It is assumed, that the same kind of evidence which establishes the divine authority of the New Testament, supports the authority of oral tradition, so as to entitle both to the same general character, of being a divine revelation. It is explicitly asserted that nothing demands our faith as Christians, but a divine revelation. But lest this principle which is the great peculiarity of Protestantism, should seem inconsistent with the Roman Catholic doctrine on the subject, its effect is completely neutralised, by an unwarrantable extension of the meaning of the phrase—"divine revelation." Thus it is taken for granted, that traditionary opinions and institutions are a part of

* Gother's "Papist truly represented"—abridged by Nightingale in his "Portraiture," p. 361. See also the "Creed of Pope Pius IV. art. XIV;" "Essay toward a Proposal for Catholic communion, p. 146; and Bishop Chaloner's "Grounds of the Old Religion," p. 66.

divine revelation; though nothing like rational proof of the assertion, has ever been adduced in its support. The principal argument, if it can be entitled to the name of argument, is derived from the supposition, that we are indebted to tradition, for the belief of the divine authority of the Scriptures. "The Christian," says Gother, "holds "the Bible to be the word of God, because in all "ages it has been so taught, preached, believed, "and delivered successively by the faithful, al- "though they have not been able to prove what "they have then taught and delivered by one text "of Scripture." This is a favourite mode of thinking and reasoning in defence of the authority of the Church. It has been already glanced at, in the former lecture; nor is it difficult to detect its sophistry, under the varying aspect it assumes in defence of oral tradition. It is unquestionably true, that we are indebted in the first instance, to what Dr. Lardner calls "a general concurring testimony and tradition," for our belief in the authenticity and genuineness of the apostolic writings. But these facts do not *constitute* their divine authority, though they are essentially requisite to it, because any deficiency as to the one would at once invalidate the claims of the other. We believe in their authenticity and genuineness, on the same grounds on which we believe in the authenticity and genuineness of any other ancient writings; but the proof of their divine authority rests on the *facts attested*, and not on the attestation of the facts. The character of the reporters establishes their credibility, and is obviously of the first importance; but *the facts themselves*, confirmed by an examination of the system of truth connected with them, and illustrated by successive and continued displays of the moral influence of that system constitute

the ground of our belief in the divine authority of the Christian revelation.

"In the beginning of the Gospel," before the historical evidence of Christian truth was completed, and during a great portion of the time in which the apostolic ministry continued, it must have necessarily happened that the religious instructions of Christians were in a great measure, derived from verbal communications. These communications however, were accredited by miraculous agency; and thus proved to be *divine* in their origin, they were entitled to implicit and immediate reception. Whatever such authorised instructors taught and enjoined, whether "by word," that is, by oral teaching, or "by epistle," it was equally binding on the Christian Church. By a divine commission, the Apostles were universal pastors; they were not confined to particular stations; they travelled in various districts, and established Churches wherever they went. These Churches they frequently visited, to "set in order the things that were wanting," to guide them in the way of truth, and to explain and enforce the various duties of the Christian life. On some occasions, they addressed letters to them, under the same infallible directions which superintended their verbal instructions. It was obviously a matter of indifference at that time, how the instructions were conveyed. The "signs of apostleship" in both cases, attested their authority, and indorsed their communications. On all they said and wrote, this superscription was legibly impressed—"WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST."

It clearly appears from the apostolic records, that their instructions, whether verbal or written, were termed *traditions* or *things delivered*. Thus addressing the Corinthians, St. Paul "praises

them for keeping the ordinances, or traditions, as he delivered them" (*καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παρισθόσις κατέχετε.* 1 Cor. xi. 2.) He exhorts the Thessalonians to "withdraw themselves from every brother that walked disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from them." (2 Thess. iii. 6.) and in a preceding chapter the term is most distinctly applied to both modes of communication.—"Therefore brethren, stand fast and hold *the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*" (ii. 15.)

Now according to the Roman Catholics, the "traditions by word," have been as faithfully preserved from age to age, as the "tradition by epistle;" and therefore possess the same authority, as they did in the days of the Apostles. The point in dispute affects the premises of this argument; and the simple question at present before us is this—Have we the same reason for admitting the genuineness, purity and authority of those traditions which *were never recorded*, as we have for believing the genuineness, purity and authority of those which *were recorded*? Without availing ourselves of the presumptive argument derived from the reasonings of our Lord against the tradition of the Pharisees; or adverting to those objections which arise from a minute examination of the traditions themselves; or considering the extreme improbability, after the corruption which had been supported by Jewish traditions, that inspired instructors would expose the Christian Church to the danger of similar corruptions; I would in the present instance rest the argument on the question, I have just stated. Can any rational inquirer, who divests himself of the prejudices and prepossessions of education, seriously believe that what was never written, never committed to authentic documents, but consigned to

the treacherous, and uncertain preservation of the human memory, continually liable to be forgotten, or altered by omissions and distortions—can any one believe that such an oral deposit, after the lapse of years and ages, can be as pure, as uncorrupted, and as well entitled to our confidence and reception, as a *written tradition*, composed by an infallible teacher, appealed to by an uninterrupted succession of the faithful, and amidst all their controversial discussions, regarded by contending parties as their only ultimate and decisive authority? Who is not acquainted with the proverbial uncertainties of verbal and reported testimony? Who does not calculate on the probabilities of falsehood being mingled in various proportions with the truth? Who, that knows any thing of human nature, is not prepared to find the simplest tale exaggerated, and its original form altered and enlarged by successive accumulations? Does it accord with the wisdom of God, or his procedure on former occasions, to believe that he would leave his Church to depend upon the erring and uncertain light of oral tradition, after miracles and inspiration had ceased, and the will of the “faithful and true witness” had been revealed? Amazing indeed must be that credulity, which can receive such dogmas as these! And still more amazing, the presumption of those, who, in defiance of all the dictates of common sense and experience, can assert that what was never written, can equal in its purity and authority, the recorded instructions of Evangelists and Apostles!

The necessity that exists for committing to writing, *any* portion of divine revelation, naturally justifies the conclusion, that *all* that is divinely revealed, and of permanent and universal obligation would be transmitted through the same medium. The obvious superiority of this mode of

conveying revealed truth above all others in respect of purity, certainty, and perpetuity, must occur to every reflecting mind: and no reasoning is necessary in order to its elucidation. It strikes us with the force of a self-evident proposition.

It is truly inexplicable, by what dexterity of argumentation, any one can persuade himself to believe, that we have just as much, and no more reason to be assured, that the Scriptures are the word of God, than we have for the authority of unwritten traditions! There is only one way of giving the semblance of rationality to such argumentation; and that is—by depreciating the evidence of the divine authority of the one, in order to equalise it, with the deficient authority of the other. This is the uniform mode of defence, adopted by the advocates of oral tradition. They inform us, that “the tradition of the Church of Rome is our only reason for receiving the books of Scripture; and that we can have no other reason imaginable, to believe them true and genuine, but, because the Catholic Church has believed so before them.”* This is also asserted by Gother in the extract before cited, and accords with other instances of gratuitous and unsupported assumption. There is an evident confounding of facts, with the grounds, or reasons of those facts.—The facts which are brought forward as analogous, and as mutually supporting each other, are—that from the beginning of Christianity, the Scriptures have been received as divine; and that certain traditions not contained in the Scriptures, but depending exclusively on a succession of verbal testimonies, have also been received, as of divine authority. Now admitting the latter state-

* “The Protestant’s Trial by the written word.” Sect. II. p .6.

ment to the full extent of their explanations, is there not an essential difference, between the reasons, why “the whole Bible is held to be the word of God, in all ages by a constant succession of the faithful,” and the reason why in all ages, certain oral traditions have been successively received? In the one case, the fact of successive and uninterrupted belief, has arisen from the possession of written documents, which, according to the laws of historic credibility and rational evidence, were the genuine productions of inspired writers. In the other, the continuity of belief has had no other support, at any one specific period, but the prior belief of those who lived at a preceding period. There has been nothing distinct from the circumstance of prior belief, to adduce in its vindication. In the one instance, faith is the result of evidence; in the other, evidence is the result of faith. The *written* traditions are believed, because they are genuine; the *unwritten* traditions are considered to be genuine, because they are believed. Obtuse, indeed, must be that perception, which discerns not the difference between these supposed corresponding facts, and the grounds on which they are respectively supported; and tenacious must be his adherence to a systematic hypothesis, who can identify or confound them!

I cannot close these general remarks, without observing how dangerously the Roman Catholic reduces and invalidates the proofs of the divine origin of Christianity, in order to support the authority of the Church. If an intelligent sceptic were to inquire—‘have you no other reason to believe that the Bible is the word of God, than you have for believing in the divine authority of oral tradition? Is the one proved to be divine, in no other way, and by no other arguments than you are able to bring forward in support of the other?’

I am at a loss to conceive what rational and convincing reply, could be returned to such inquiries, on the principles of the Roman Catholic faith.

It has been already observed, that the strongest presumptive arguments are opposed to the authority of oral tradition. They acquire an accession of force, from the circumstance, that the apostolic writings contain no instructions, concerning the necessary methods to be adopted, either for preserving or ascertaining the purity of unwritten traditions. It might naturally be expected, that the lapse of time would adulterate and impair their purity. It is therefore reasonable to look for some information, by which true apostolic traditions might be distinguished, from the inventions and additions of men, if it had been the will of the Almighty, to revive and continue that medium of communicating revealed truth.—But where do we find such information? A total silence pervades the sacred oracles, and the rules by which Roman Catholic writers, pretend to “know and discern apostolic traditions,” are founded solely on the authority of the Fathers! One of their writers endeavours to establish three rules for this purpose; but in perfect consistency with his creed, he derives them only from the writings of *Tertullian*, *Augustin* and *Irenæus*: nor does he seem aware of the argument against the claims of unwritten tradition, which is involved in this exclusive reference to uninspired authorities.*

* Bishop Chaloner's “Grounds of the Old Religion,” Sect. iii. p. 66—68. The first rule adduced by the Bishop is taken from *Tertullian*, *De Præscript*, c. 28. “Quod apud multos unum invenitur, non est erratum sed traditum.” What is found amongst many—one and the same is no error, but is a tradition. The second rule is from *Augustin*, *De Bapt*: lib. 2. c. 7. lib. 4. c. 23. and lib. 5. c. 33—which, says the Bishop, is this, “Whatever is found to have been held by the universal Church, throughout the world, and not to have had its beginning from

Admitting the principle, that oral tradition is a part of divine revelation, I object not to the rules laid down for the purpose of ascertaining it. The fact of this exclusive reference to such authorities is adverted to, merely for the sake of shewing, that the total silence of Scripture on the subject, and the consequent necessity of having recourse to insulated extracts from the Fathers, are presumptive considerations against traditional authority. If the New Testament were an imperfect rule, there would have been some reference to another source of information, on those points on which it was supposed to be deficient: in like manner as we find frequent and distinct references to a subsequent revelation in the promises and allusions of the Old Testament. But this is not the case in the Christian Scriptures; and whatever the local and temporary necessities of the Church might require, in the way of oral tradition, there is not one passage to prove *its permanent use*, after the completion of the canon of Scripture.

I shall now briefly state the direct and positive proofs, which tend to invalidate the assumed authority of unwritten traditions: and I remark,

1. That, some of the traditions represented as apostolical, are unsupported by the authority of the earliest Fathers.

On the principle of tradition as assumed and explained by the Roman Church, we might natu-

any ordinance of bishops or councils, but to have been prior to any such ordinance, that same is to be esteemed a tradition of the Apostles of Christ." The third rule is from *Irenæus*, in his third book, *Contra, Heres*; Cap. iv. "That to discern what traditions are apostolical, and what are not, we must have recourse to the Churches founded by the Apostles, and learn from them, what the Apostles taught." The Bishop of course makes a special and exclusive application of this last rule to the Church of Rome.

rally expect that the most distinct and uncorrupted account of institutions and opinions depending on such tradition, would be met with in the ecclesiastical writings of the first century. To the historical fragments of that period we should be prepared to look, for the purest record of traditional observances. To illustrate the argument, suppose I were to refer to the annual commemoration of the fifth of November, in this country, as an unquestionable proof of the fact, that a certain conspiracy against a Protestant king and government had been detected and defeated on that day, above two hundred years ago ; if the only proof of that fact were conceived to rest on oral tradition, preserved by the practice referred to, would it not be deemed, a sufficient reason for calling in question the fact of that conspiracy, if there were no allusions to the event or the commemoration of it, in any of the writers of that period, and for fifty years afterwards ? Would not this inexplicable omission be deemed a strong presumption, and even a positive proof of the improbability and non-existence of that conspiracy ? I am not on this point advancing any opinion as to the historical evidence of the fact adverted to : it is adduced merely as a hypothetical illustration of the argument before us. How then will the advocates of oral tradition account for the circumstance, that many opinions and practices, supported by the Roman Catholic Church on the ground of tradition, are never referred to in the writings of the primitive Fathers ? It is unquestionable, that in those writings, NOT A SINGLE PASSAGE CAN BE FOUND on *the sacrifice of the mass for souls in purgatory, incense, chrism, holy water, wax-lights, splendid garments, &c. &c.*; yet all these observances are supported by the authority of apostolic traditions ! It is un-

necessary to remark that there is not the shadow of allusion to such things as these in the *written* traditions of the New Testament; and it is a proof that they were unknown among the primitive Christians, because there are no traces to be found of them in the writings of the earliest Fathers.

The apocryphal writings of the Jews, were never admitted by the Christians of the first three centuries to possess any authority in religion. In the first catalogue of canonical books, published by the Council of Laodicea, and in the catalogues given by *Origen*, *Athanasius*, and *Cyril*, the apocrypha does not appear in their account of the Jewish Canon. *Jerome* expressly assures us, that though the apocrypha was read by the Church, yet it was not received amongst the canonical Scriptures.* Notwithstanding these early testimonies, the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, *decreed the divine authority of the apocrypha!* In the decisions of that council, the books of *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Baruch*, the two books of *Esther* and *Daniel* are explicitly mentioned; and it is declared concerning these whole books with all their parts, that *whosoever rejects them as not canonical, is accursed!* On the ground of supposed traditionary testimony is this declaration founded, and an anathema is pronounced on those who reject it, though that testimony is opposed to the declaration of another council, and is altogether unsupported by the authority of the Christian Church in the first four centuries. So much for the Church of Rome, as the infalli-

* “Ecclesia quidem legit, sed intra canonicas Scripturas non recipit.” Hieron. Pref. in Lib. Salomon.

ble depository and uncorrupted preserver of tradition!*

2. In the next place, some of the pretended apostolic traditions of the Church of Rome, are directly contrary to the principles and practices of the primitive Church and the declarations of the early Fathers.

The use of images in religious worship, the adoration of saints and angels, the homage offered to the Virgin Mary, the absurd tenet of Supererogation, and some other peculiarities of the Roman Catholic Religion might be specified as not only unsupported by the testimony of the earliest Fathers of the Church, but as opposed to the reasonings and principles which pervade their writings, and totally unauthorised by the practice of the Christian Church in the first century. But the minute investigation of these subjects will require our attention, in another part of our course: and the proof of the assertion before us, I shall confine to the illustration of one or two topics. The very principle of oral tradition as opposed to the sufficiency of Scripture is directly contrary to numerous declarations, which are to be found

* "Some thought it strange," says the Roman Catholic Historian of the Council of Trent, "that they should have so easily defined the principal and most important points of Religion, which till then had never been decided; giving canonical authority to books considered uncertain and apocryphal, rendering authentic a translation differing from the original text, prescribing and restricting the manner of understanding the word of God. Nor was there amongst the Prelates, (who composed the council at that time) any one worthy of attention from his learning. There were some lawyers learned in their profession, but unskilled in religion, a few theologians, but these of less than ordinary talent, the greater number gentlemen or courtiers.—It could not be said that one thousandth part of the Christian world was then represented."

See Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent. Lib. II.
Anno. 1546.

in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Though the Council of Trent decreed, "that traditions should be received as of equal authority with the Scriptures themselves :" and in consequence of this decision, many advocates of tradition render it the sole interpreter of Scripture, regarding the written word as unintelligible, "a dead and unsensed letter," as some of the writers describe it, till explained by the authority and traditional practices of their church, yet some of the most eminent Fathers and Saints of whom they boast as being members of their own communion, have most unequivocally asserted the absolute and exclusive sufficiency of the sacred volume.

St. Irenæus assures us, "that we have received "the method of our salvation from no others, but "from them, by whom the gospel came to us; "which gospel the Apostles first preached; but "afterwards by the will of God delivered in writing to be for the future, the pillar and foundation "of our faith." (Lib. iii. c. 13.)

In *St. Cyprian* we meet with the following inquiry against one who reasoned from tradition—" whence have you that tradition? comes it from "the authority of the Lord and of the gospel, or "from the apostolic epistles ? for God hath testified that we are to do those things which are "written. If it be commanded in the gospel, or "contained in the epistles or the Acts of the "Apostles, then let us observe it, as a divine and "holy tradition."* (Epist. 74.)

St. Hilary, writing to the Emperor Constantius, commends him "for regulating his faith only "according to those things which are written :" and to enforce this sentiment, he says, "he who

* See the quotation from *St. Chrysostom* p. 37.

"refuseth this, is Antichrist, and he who dis-
"sembles on this point is anathema!"

St. Basil, in defence of the doxology as it was used in his days, has the following testimony on this subject. "We have received it from our Fathers, but this is not enough for us, for they followed the authority of the Scriptures making its testimonies, the principles on which they built.". (*De Spiritu Sancto*. c. 7.)

St. Austin, has numerous passages on the sufficiency of Scripture.* "The Holy Scripture fixeth the rule of our doctrine; and is a divine balance for weighing it," (*Contra Donat.* l. 2. c. 6.) In his controversy with Maximinius, he says, "neither ought I now to allege the Nicene Council, nor you, that of Ariminum: for neither of us is bound by the authority of the one or the other. Let us both contest with the authorities of Scripture, which are witnesses common to us both. And against the Donatists, (*de unitate ecclesiæ*, c. 16.) "Let them if they can, demonstrate their church, not by the talk and rumours of oral traditions of the Africans, not by the councils of their own Bishops, not by the books of their disputers, not by deceitful miracles, but by the prescript of the law and the prophets, &c. i. e. by all the canonical authorities of the holy books."

St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, whose catechetical discourses were published, not long after the Council of Trent promulgated its anathemas, says— "It behoveth us not to deliver the very least thing of the sacred mysteries of faith, without the Holy Scripture. This is the security of our faith—not what is delivered of our own inven-

* There are many references to this Father in the admirable work of *Daille, on the use of Fathers*. B. ii. c. 2.

"tions, but what is demonstrated from the holy Scriptures."

St. Jerome tells us, that "of those things which without the authorities and testimonies of the Scripture, men invent of their own heads, as from apostolic tradition, they are smitten by the sword of God." (Comment: in Hagg. c. 1.) "It comes," says *Theophilus Alexander*, cited by Jerome, "from a demoniacal spirit, that men follow the sophisms of human minds, and think any thing divine, that wants the authority of Scripture. (Paschal: 1. 3.)*

It would be easy to enlarge the number of these citations, but they are sufficient to prove that the opinion that oral tradition is equal in authority to the Sacred Scriptures, is directly opposed to the reasonings and declarations of those eminent

* Most of these testimonies are cited by *Archbishop Tillotson*, in his "Rule of Faith." Part 4—and are closed by two remarkable passages from *Gerson* and *Lyra*. *Gerson* in his book *on the Trial of Doctrines*, says—"It is first and principally to be considered, whether a doctrine be conformable to the Holy Scripture.—*Because the Scripture is delivered to us AS A SUFFICIENT AND INFALLIBLE RULE for the government of the whole ecclesiastical body, and its members, to the end of the world: so that any doctrine not conformable to it, is to be renounced as heretical.*" Again, "what mischief, what danger, what confusion hath happened, through contempt of the Holy Scripture, which surely is sufficient for the government of the Church, else Christ must have been an imperfect law-giver." (Serm. in die Circum, &c.,

Lyra also writes thus, "As in philosophy, truth is discovered by reducing things to their first and self-evident principles; so truth is discovered as to matters of faith, by reducing them to the canonical Scriptures." (Prolog. de lib. Bib.)

I must here request the reader's attention to the testimony of *Optatus Melevitanus*, cited by *Chillingworth* in his "Discourse on the infallibility of the Roman Church," with the remarks of that acute writer on the passage. On account of its length it is inserted in the Appendix. NOTE K.

Fathers. I am aware, it may be objected, that some passages in their writings appear to sanction a contrary doctrine, and it must be confessed that on all subjects abundant proofs of inconsistency and contradiction are to be found in them. In refuting their opponents, or in explaining the sense of Scripture, they frequently reason on principles, which are actually disavowed, when they contend for the claims and prerogatives of the Church, or the See of Rome. But I am unacquainted with any passages even in these self-contradictory writers, which are opposed to these citations; and if they could be adduced, the only conclusion we could draw from the fact, would respect their inconsistency and incompetency to be considered as possessing any authority, in religious inquiries. On the other hand, the legitimate use of these citations is merely to prove the fact, that so far was unwritten tradition from being either partially or wholly the *ultimate* rule of faith and practice, that the principle itself was disclaimed by those to whom we should resort for the most satisfactory avowal and illustration of it, if it had been so understood and acted upon in the first ages of the Christian Church.

It is generally asserted by the advocates of Papal supremacy, that the pre-eminence of the See of Rome is founded upon apostolic tradition. This is one of the uses to which the principle is applied: and yet some of the earliest and most distinguished Fathers explicitly represent all the Apostles as equal in power and authority, and still more explicitly, deny the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, which is generally supported by the assumption of inequality among the Apostles. But I shall reserve the fuller elucidation of this subject to another opportunity.

3. In the third place, many traditions are termed *ecclesiastical* as distinguished from those,

which they call apostolic ; and the practices supported by such traditions confessedly originated in the authority of the Church.

On this principle, even apostolic tradition, whether written or unwritten is virtually disclaimed, as insufficient for all the purposes of a rule in religious affairs. If these ecclesiastical traditions respect mere matters of expediency, which may be admitted or rejected at pleasure, and are considered as possessing no authority over the faith and consciences of men, they may be pleaded for, on the ground of prescriptive right and established usage, but I am at liberty to reject them if they cannot be reconciled with truly apostolic traditions. Antiquity is no rational proof of the truth of principles, or of the obligation to regard particular institutions ; and the use of it, for such purposes betrays the radical deficiencies of a system. If, as the Roman Catholics assert, Scripture and apostolic tradition combined, form the rule of faith and practice, why do they resort in any case to the decrees and inventions of men ? On this principle, a novelty which might originate in the mere *ipse dixit* of his present Holiness, altogether unsupported by any former practice in the Church, might become a few centuries hence, an ecclesiastical tradition, invested with all the claims of antiquity and prescriptive right. And doubtless in this way most of their ecclesiastical traditions did originate. They were at first introduced by some intriguing pontiff, then sanctioned by some subservient council, and when time had sanctioned them, they became *traditions*. It would have required no prophetic talent to foresee, that abuses and corruptions must inevitably result from the operation of such a dangerous principle ; and the history of the Roman Church presents numerous instances of the truth of this representation.

Unwritten tradition is generally contended for on the ground, that what Apostles *said*, as well as what they *wrote*, demands our implicit belief. The principle and consequences of this argument have already come under our notice; and I advert to it again for the sake of shewing, that the moment we desert a written standard of faith and practice, we commit ourselves to all, that the wayward passions and prejudices and imaginations of men, may lead them to impose on the Christian Church. Let oral tradition be assumed as in any circumstances, an ULTIMATE AND PERMANENT rule, and though in the first appeal to it, it may be supported by pretended apostolic authority, it will inevitably lead to the introduction of other principles and practices, than what are sanctioned by that authority.—There is a flexibility in the principle that makes it a convenient covering for innovation and experiment; and an obscurity that conceals its operation from being distinctly ascertained and examined. *Ecclesiastical* traditions, which they never pretend to have derived from apostolic usage, illustrate and confirm the reasonings I have adduced. Hence it is natural to inquire, how are we to distinguish an apostolic from an ecclesiastical tradition? As there are no written documents to appeal to, may not what are called apostolic traditions in some cases at least, be merely ecclesiastical? Is there not reason to suspect, that what is obviously inconsistent with the simplicity of primitive Christianity, as delineated in the records of inspiration, and to which there is not the slightest allusion, is notwithstanding all their pretensions to the contrary, NOT apostolic, but a corrupt innovation? How can this be determined to the satisfaction of an impartial inquirer? It will not convince him, to say, that it has been

always thought an apostolic tradition. For what reason has he to believe this? Can it be supposed that he has read all the Greek and Roman Fathers; or if he has read them, that they are infallible guides? Might there not be a misrepresentation of facts, a distortion of opinions? Did not "the mystery of iniquity begin to work," even under the jealous and scrutinising observation of Apostles themselves? Can it be affirmed with certainty, that, whatever that "mysterious iniquity" might be, it had not affected the Churches of the latter part of the first century, and of course might be expected to be still more widely pernicious in a subsequent period? The practice then, respecting which our inquirer can find nothing that remotely or directly bears upon it, in the inspired writings of the Apostles themselves, cannot rationally be admitted as apostolic, on such insufficient grounds as these; and he who demands this admission, may secure the assent of credulity, but he will never deserve the assent of conviction.

If it be difficult to ascertain what traditions are apostolic and what are not; if admitting the authority of tradition in any case, as an ultimate rule of judgment, naturally lead to the use of that authority in order to sanction practices confessedly of human appointment; and if the distinction between apostolic and ecclesiastical tradition be a proof of that natural consequence; then I conceive that we are warranted to assert not merely the inexpediency and inutility, but the positive danger arising from the principle of oral tradition, to the purity of Christian institutions, and the authority of the Christian Scriptures. What imaginable limit can be placed to these ecclesiastical traditions? There is not a fancy or a fiction of the human mind, that may not at some time or other

start up into a religious principle, shielded by this arbitrary, assumed, and self-constituted authority!

4. Many traditions of the Church of Rome, are directly contrary to the declaration of the sacred volume. What can be more explicit and intelligible than the prohibition of images in religious worship; and yet in opposition to a divine law, the Church of Rome has declared that the use of them is supported by tradition, and that whoever condemns them is accursed! What sentiment is more clearly conveyed in the New Testament, than that which asserts the *exclusive* and *all-sufficient* mediation of Jesus Christ, and yet the Church of Rome virtually sets aside that exclusiveness. Though our Lord has said, "No man can come unto the Father but by me," they have recourse to the intercession of saints and angels; and thousands are instructed to address them at the same time, as if they possessed the perfection of omnipresence! What *written* tradition is more unequivocal than, *that Jesus Christ is the sole Head of the Church*, and yet this very title is given to an erring and peccable mortal, by the pretended authority of tradition! "When," says our Lord, "ye have done all, which is com-
" manded you, say we are unprofitable servants;" and yet by the authority of tradition they support the monstrous notion of *supererogation*! An apostolic writer pronounces a benediction on "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" but according to their traditional authority, though a man exhibit the most lucid proof of faith and obedience, in the practice of every Christian virtue, and the exclusive dependence of all his hopes on the Saviour, he is still *accursed*, and will "without doubt be damned everlastinglly," if he is not in communion with the Church of

Rome! An undoubted apostolic tradition commands the primitive Christians to partake of the cup in the Eucharist, and represents that participation as the "communion of the blood of Christ;" but the authority of unwritten tradition denies to the laity the use of the cup, and appropriates all the wine to the priesthood! The "great Teacher sent from God," tells us, that "the rich man died and was buried and lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments," and though prayer was made to Abraham, it is said that there was an impassable gulph between them: yet the authority of tradition is made to support the notion of a middle state—a purgatorial region, out of which prayers and masses offered up by the priests and paid for by the people, will most assuredly deliver them! I am compelled in these references to anticipate the subjects of future discussion; but these are sufficient to shew, that the unwritten traditions of the Church of Rome, are directly contrary to the written traditions of the sacred volume.

5. These general arguments I shall close by remarking that the appeal to oral tradition as an ultimate rule of faith and practice, necessarily tends to diminish the authority of written Revelation. Assuming, for the sake of giving greater force to the argument, that there is nothing in these oral traditions directly opposed to the Scriptures, still this injurious and degrading consequence will follow. To prove it, it is only necessary to consult the writings of Roman Catholics, when they plead the cause of tradition. On other occasions, they can pronounce their eulogium on the Scriptures; but the moment they contend with Protestants, they employ the most depreciating terms for the purpose of proving the necessity of oral tradition. Then the Scriptures are "a dead

letter," "a mere collection of narrations and epistles," quite insufficient for all the purposes of religious instruction, till explained by "the unwritten word!" Hear the language of a modern advocate of the Roman Church on this subject:

" It is in vain that you look into the Scriptures " for a full, clear, and succinct statement of the " faith and practice, required of those, for whose " use they were written. The articles of doctrine " are scattered here and there without any atten- " tion to order: their meaning is frequently hidden " under the obscurity of the language: the ad- " vance of the sincere inquirer is repeatedly ar- " rested by apparent contradictions: and it seldom " happens, that any two readers, after a patient " and impartial investigation, agree in the same " decision. Of all the possible forms under " which a rule of faith could have been published " to mankind, the New Testament is, as such, " *the most incongruous and confused.* It is what " no sensible man would ever have adopted: and " certainly we ought not to attribute to the wis- " dom of God, that which we judge unworthy " the wisdom of man."*

You will naturally inquire, is this the language of one who admits even the inspiration of the Scriptures; for if the argument has any force at all, it militates against their authority as well as their sufficiency. He proceeds in the same stile of depreciation to charge them with ambiguity,— " with apparently contradictory statements, per- " plexing the understanding of the reader, and " compelling him to rest on the conjectures of his " own judgment." He is particularly surprised,

* *The Rev. John Lingard's "Strictures on Dr. Marsh's comparative view of the Churches of England and Rome."* p. 42, 43.

if the Scriptures were intended as a perfect rule, that they do not resemble the Protestant standards which have “enlightened and perplexed the world.” On this principle he conceives they ought to have exhibited a systematic arrangement of doctrines and duties, and not to have been an accidental assortment of “letters and tracts.”

I shall not trespass on your patience, my friends, in replying to this mode of sceptical argumentation. Though I am aware that the writer reasons hypothetically, it is clearly such kind of reasoning as would not for a moment be admitted by those who entertain a proper degree of reverence for the oracles of God. With equal propriety, he might arraign at the bar of his limited judgment, the wisdom of the Almighty, because in the volume of nature every thing is not classified and arranged in systematic order. Besides, had the Scriptures contained a formal code of principles and obligations in the shape of regular and distinct propositions, there would still have been on the part of those who will not submit to the decisions of Scripture, the same scope for distortion and misinterpretation. Have there not been most furious controversies in the Church of Rome, about terms and phrases in their own standards and confessions; and are there not as many disputes about the meaning of the thirty-nine articles, as about the language of St. Paul’s epistles?

But I inquire still further, if such be the deficiencies of Scripture as the rule of faith and practice, in what way has *tradition* supplied those deficiencies? Are traditions regularly arranged, and can we appeal to *them* as a tangible and intelligible rule? Are there no contradictory statements of a traditional nature? What was the immediate cause of the great schism between the Western and the Eastern Church, when the Pope

excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople, and his *lowliness* in the East anathematised his *holiness* in the West, but a dispute about the traditionary method of keeping Easter? What has divided the members of the Roman Catholic Church, respecting the question of papal infallibility? Do not both parties resort to tradition and the authority of the Fathers?

If the Scriptures, as our opponents admit, be the word of God, they are sufficient, or they are insufficient for all the essential purposes of religious instruction and ecclesiastical government. If not sufficient, let them present a *definite* and *intelligible* rule to supply that want of sufficiency. Let them not appeal to *things as they are, or as they have been*, but to the divine warrant and authority for such things. Let them point out the passages which intimate either directly or by implication, the inadequacy of *written* tradition.—Let them prove by distinct references the conveyance of divine authority to the Church of Rome. Above all let them prove, that there is any principle or institution the belief and observation of which are essentially necessary to personal religion and eternal salvation, for which there is not *sufficient* and *explicit* information in the sacred volume?* And finally, to be consistent with their

* The Rev. John Lingard, in the “*Strictures*” before cited, endeavours to prove that Protestants observe the first day of the week as their Sabbath, and baptise infants, on the sole ground of oral tradition. In reference to the first case, I observe, that the *moral* obligation of devoting a seventh portion of our time to the special service of God, is established by the most unequivocal assertions of the Old Testament: and the change of the day is supported by the unquestionable fact, that the primitive Christians observed the *first* day of the week, in commemoration of our Lord’s resurrection. They assembled together on two successive *first days*, after he rose from the dead: and it is clear from Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. xi. 20. Rev. i. 10, that what is expressly termed “the Lord’s Day” was regarded by the

principles, let them abandon all further reference to the Scriptures as the oracular and authoritative guide of faith and practice.

primitive Churches as the Christian Sabbath. Mr. Lingard thinks our translation of Acts xx. 7. inaccurate, because it " seems to hint, rather remotely that they were *accustomed* to assemble on that day;" and he renders the passage *ἐν δὲ τῇ ματὶ τῶν σαββάτων συνηγμενῶν τῶν μαθητῶν τε κλάσαι ἄρτον.* "On the first day of the week the disciples *having been assembled* to break bread," &c. On this proposed amendment, I remark, that it is not merely from the phrase *συνηγμενῶν τῶν μαθητῶν* that we infer the custom of assembling on the first day, but from the preceding information connected with it that the Apostle waited at Troas, the whole week, in order to observe the Lord's supper with the Church in that place. Had the meeting of the disciples been *occasional*, the historian would have naturally adopted a very different mode of relation. I would remark that many passages in the writings of the early Fathers, prove that the primitive Christians had been from the beginning in the habit of observing the first day of the week, as the Christian Sabbath. Here, Mr. Lingard would say, that I resort to *tradition*. This I acknowledge; but not as *the ultimate reason or rule* of the practice in question. I object not to any argument from well authenticated traditional relations or observances, to confirm or illustrate scriptural allusions: but this is materially different from appealing to such traditions as *in themselves* authoritative and obligatory.

On the subject of *infant baptism* it is common for Roman Catholics to assert that our only reason for the practice is derived from tradition; and the Antipædobaptists generally avail themselves of this unwarrantable concession. I am, however, most deliberately convinced that the practice needs no traditional authority for its support. It accepts indeed in confirmation of scriptural reasonings, the continued and successive testimonies of ecclesiastical writers from the earliest times; but its obligation as a divine ordinance is founded on the strongest analogical reasonings, the scope of the Abrahamic Covenant, the intimations of prophecy, the conduct of our Lord himself, the unrepealed institution of infant-discipleship, the difficulty of accounting for there being no apostolic record of the baptisms of adult children of baptised Christians, and the practice of the Apostles in baptising "households." Mr. L——, further alludes to our receiving the canonical books of the New Testament, on the ground of tradition; but to this most sophistical argument in defence of tradition as an ultimate rule of faith, I have already adverted in the course of the lecture.

What expressions can be more degrading to the sacred volume, than to represent it, as a *dead letter*, *an unintelligible record*, till explained by the interpretations of their Church, and the “traditions of their elders!” And this is *the uniform* and *invariable* style of Roman Catholic writers. It is not asserted by Protestants, that *every part* of Scripture is alike intelligible: but to suppose that the Almighty has *revealed* his will, and that *any part* of that revelation, the knowledge of which is essential to salvation, is not intelligible, till tradition, or ecclesiastical authorities have explained it, is a tremendous reflection on the wisdom of God! It is such a reflection as at once invalidates its sacred claims and insults its divine Author.

What is the practical effect of this appeal to tradition? It “makes void the word of God.”—It leads men to attach no importance to the language of the inspired volume; however plain and explicit its meaning, they must distrust their eyes, and ears, and understanding, till it has been explained by the infallible authority of the Church: and as the Priest is the only representative of that infallibility to the immense majority of individuals in the communion of the Church, they must of course affix no sense of their own to the words of Scripture. They must *implicitly* receive his explanations; and thus a foundation is laid for the most humiliating dominion over the faith and consciences of men. The assertion of an individual becomes the rule of judgment. The habit of neglecting the Scriptures is confirmed by their systematic rejection of them as the ultimate rule; and ignorance, superstition and ecclesiastical intolerance prevail, in exact proportion to the practical and uncounteracted influence of this traditional authority.

It is related of Omar, the Caliph of Alexandria, that when he committed to the flames, the valuable library of that city, he asked in reference to the volumes, only two questions: are they agreeable to the Koran? Then burn them, they are unnecessary—are they against the Koran? Then burn them, they are false! Far be it from me, to approve the mad decision of this savage Saracen: but I would apply the principle of his inquiry to the question before us. Does tradition agree with the Scriptures? Then as a rule of faith it is unnecessary. Does it oppose them? Then it is false; “what is the chaff to the wheat?” “Let God be true, but every man a liar.”

In the language of Chillingworth, I exhort you, my friends, to remember that THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE ALONE IS OUR RELIGION. “I profess plainly,” exclaims that acute and learned writer, “that “I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, “but upon this rock only. I see plainly that “there are Popes against Popes, Councils against “Councils, some Fathers against others, the same “Fathers against themselves, a consent of Fa-“thers of one age, against a consent of Fathers “of another age, the Church of one age, against “the Church of another age. Traditive interpre-“tations of Scripture are pretended; but there “are few or none to be found. No tradition, but “only of Scripture, can derive itself from the “fountain, but may be plainly proved, either to “have been brought in, in such an age after Christ, “or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, “there is no sufficient certainty, but of Scripture “only, for any considering man to build upon.— “This therefore, and this only I have reason to “believe: this I will profess, and according to “this I will live. Propose me any thing out of “this book, and require whether I believe it or

"no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to
"human reason, I will subscribe it with hand
"and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be
"stronger than this—God hath said so, therefore
"it is true. In other things, I will take no man's
"liberty of judgment from him, neither shall any
"man take mine from me. I will think no man
"the worse man, nor the worse Christian, I will
"love no man the less, for differing in opinion
"from me. And what measure I mete to others,
"I expect from them again. I am fully assured,
"that God does not, and therefore that men
"ought not, to require any more of any man than
"this, to believe the Scripture to be the word
"of God, to endeavour to find the true sense of
"it, and to live according to it."*

Our opponents are continually asserting the insufficiency of Scripture, for the sake of supporting their equally gratuitous assertion, respecting the authority of the Church and the necessity of tradition. But for what are the Scriptures insufficient? They are insufficient for one who endeavours to establish by their authority, the exclusive right of the Church of Rome to be considered the Church of Christ; they are insufficient to prove the supremacy of one bishop over all the Christian world; they are insufficient to support that mighty system of ecclesiastical domination which has been the terror and the disgrace of the world; they are insufficient for the purposes of secular policy and secular splendour; they give no countenance to "lying wonders," pagan ceremonies, bloody persecutions, and the prostration of the human intellect at the feet of an ambitious and intolerant

* Chillingworth's Works. Chap. VI. § 56.

priesthood: and he who wishes to prove the divine right of such a system will never find the Scriptures, a sufficient authority. But "if any man will do the will of God he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." For all the purposes of human salvation, the sacred volume is a sufficient guide. It unfolds the character of God, the spirituality of his law, the humiliating doctrine of human depravity, the perfection of that atonement which the Divine Redeemer accomplished by the sacrifice of himself, the promise of purifying influence to renew and sanctify the hearts of men, the nature of acceptable worship, the principles of true religion, and the prospects of eternal glory. On all these subjects of inquiry, its discoveries are explicit and intelligible; and in the principles and consequences they involve, it comprehends all that is sublime in doctrine all that is holy in tendency, all that is consolatory and delightful to the human heart, and all that is essential to our present and everlasting happiness. It proscribes not the right use of our rational faculties in matters of religion. It does not command men to disbelieve their senses. It furnishes general principles and maxims, of most extensive application; and the very effort of the Romanists to employ its language in defiance of their own peculiarities, is a tacit admission of its sufficiency. My Christian friends, bind this sacred volume to your hearts. Rejoice in the proof of its divine authority; with "simplicity and godly sincerity" endeavour to ascertain its meaning; seek by fervent prayer the illumination of the Holy Spirit; let your conduct be an intelligible explanation of your principles: and while the Bible is dearer to you than ever, by the examination of its claims, and the comparison of its

authority with the opinions and traditions of men, aim at the universal dissemination of it; till "all "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of "the Lord," and the Shaster of the Brahmin, the Koran of the Turk, and the "traditions of the "Fathers" be exchanged for the **PURE, EXCLUSIVE, AND ALL-SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.**

LECTURE III.

ON THE PAPAL SUPREMACY.

IN the character of Jesus Christ, during his incarnate state on earth, there was a mysterious combination of grandeur and humility. His assumption of our nature was an act of omnipotent mercy; but the “espoused wife of a carpenter” was his Virgin Mother. His birth was announced by a choir of angels; but that intelligence was at first made known to the shepherds of Bethlehem. A star guided the Eastern magi to the hallowed spot where the Saviour of the world was born; and they found him “laid in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn!” When he entered on his public ministry, “a voice from the excellent glory” attested his divine commission, and proclaimed his sacred authority; but that scene of splendour on the banks of the Jordan, was succeeded by the solitude and temptations of the desert. A similar succession of glory and of humiliation, marked the ever-varying life of the incarnate Redeemer. The glory which invested his character, was of an order and degree which placed it infinitely beyond our reach; and it is the humiliation only, which we can imitate. It is the highest dignity of a Christian to “know the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to the death” of his Lord.

The humility of Christ appeared in his simplicity and condescension. There was nothing allied to secular power and splendour in the life and actions of our Lord. His “kingdom was not of this world.” He disclaimed and condemned every approach to those principles of worldly policy, on which the maxims and arrangements of civil government are founded. In the whole course of his ministry he endeavoured to repress the aspiring and ambitious thoughts of his disciples; and by his instructions and example, taught them, that humility, meekness, condescension and benevolence, were the most honourable attainments by which they could be distinguished.

The character of the Saviour illustrates the genius, and exemplifies the tendency of his religion. Point out if you can, one principle or institution, favourable to the excitement of pride, ambition and vain-glory? With what solemnity of emphasis, and variety of argument did he assert the necessity of self-denial, and oppose the secular and carnal expectations of his followers. How often did he mortify the proud, disappoint the ambitious, and set forth the advantages of spirituality and devotion. And the character of his disciples, as delineated in the Acts of the Apostles, accords with these views of our holy religion. The ascension of our Lord elevated and refined their conceptions; and the baptism of the Spirit purified their minds from the influence and prejudices, by which they were before enslaved and degraded. The instructions addressed to the Churches under their apostolic care, exhibit the same holy principles. The love of pre-eminence, the lust of power, the vanity of ambition, the fallacious appearances and dangerous consequences of pride are faithfully pour-

trayed and most impressively condemned; and when they exclaimed, "we have the mind of Christ," they might have applied the assertion of their authority, to the temper of their religion.

Suppose a man utterly ignorant of all existing systems of religion in the Christian world, and of course a stranger to the principles and institutions of the Roman hierarchy, were to enter for the first time on the perusal of the New Testament. He might meet with some allusions and representations, which he might not immediately comprehend; but admitting him to be a man of good common sense, without prejudices and prepossessions, I ask, would such an unbiassed inquirer find any thing in the New Testament—like the system of ecclesiastical government obtaining in the Church of Rome? I ask not, what would be his conclusions as to the specific form and modification of Church polity, which he might think most consonant with the spirit of the gospel, and the character of apostolic institutions; but merely inquire whether it would ever occur to him, that what is generally termed *Popery* (and I use the word with no disrespectful intentions) was precisely and in all respects, the system that he could find in the New Testament. It is no answer to say, that if informed of such a system, he might possibly put such a construction on some passages, as might be in some way favourable to it. For there is no accounting for the perverseness of human ingenuity in supporting its conjectures and speculations: and as some sagacious critics have found the history of the Israelites in the Iliad of Homer, so some might find the model of Popery in the acts and writings of the Apostles! But would any one ever think, from what is recorded in those writings, of one mere man, without miraculous gifts, and some-

times, without either faith or holiness, being THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH—of ALL the Churches on earth—of his possessing “royalties”—of his power to absolve subjects from their allegiance to their governments—of his being “Christ’s Vicar on earth,” “God’s Vicegerent,” “Priest of the world,” “most holy Father”—would any one find all this in the New Testament? Would he be able to trace the numerous gradations of ecclesiastical office, from his holiness the Pope, down to the meanest mendicant Friar under his dominion, in the Christian Scriptures? Would he find a single word about costly altars, golden and ivory crucifixes, wax candles, fantastic vestments, splendid processions, innumerable genuflections, and unmeaning ceremonies? Could he develope from such writings the principles and regulations of the canon law, and all the arcana and policy of a spiritual court? I will not, my friends, insult your understandings, by attempting an answer to these inquiries. You know that in vain, on any rational principle of interpretation, could such a system be supported by the language of Scripture; and that it is obviously requisite for those who defend it, to appeal to other and less inflexible authorities? Well may they resort to tradition and the Fathers, when they find such little use can be made of the New Testament. It is truly on such principles, and for such objects, “a *dead letter!*”

We are now to ascertain what are the sentiments of the Roman Catholic Church on the Papal Supremacy: I shall endeavour to present a faithful transcript of their reasonings on this subject.

In the XXIIIrd. article of Pope Pius’s Creed, a true Catholic is taught to say—“I do acknowledge the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman

“ Church to be the mother and mistress of all
“ Churches ; and I do promise and swear true
“ obedience to the Bishop of Rome, the successor
“ of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles and
“ Vicar of Jesus Christ.”

“ *What is the Catholic doctrine as to the Pope's Supremacy?* That St. Peter was head of the Church under Christ—That the Pope or Bishop of Rome is at present head of the Church, and Christ's Vicar upon earth. *How do we prove these propositions?*—By the unanimous consent of the Fathers, and the tradition of the Church. The Bishops of Rome are the successors of St. Peter, who translated his chair from Antioch to Rome, and died Bishop of Rome. Hence the See of Rome in all ages, is called the See of Peter, the Chair of Peter, and absolutely the See Apostolic ; and in that quality has, from the beginning, exercised jurisdiction over all other Churches, as appears from the best records of ancient Church History. *Why do you call the Romish Church the mother and mistress of all Churches?*—Because her Bishop is St. Peter's successor, and Christ's Vicar on earth, and consequently, the Father and Pastor of all the faithful ; and therefore the Church is the mother and mistresses of all Churches.”*

“ Nothing can be more evident from Scripture,” says Bishop Chaloner, “ than that our Lord did make St. Peter the chief pastor of the Church ; giving him a name, that implied no less than being a rock or foundation-stone, (John i.42.) declaring, that upon *this rock*, he would build his Church ; (Matt. xvi, 18.) promising him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with the chief power of binding and loosing ; praying for him, that his

* “ The Grounds of the Catholic Faith.” P. 51—52.

" faith might not fail, and giving him the commission to *confirm his disciples*, viz: the rest of the Apostles, (Luke xxii. 31, 32.) In fine, three times solemnly committing to his care all his lambs, and also all his sheep, without exception, that is, his whole flock; (John xxi. 15, &c.) after having asked him, 'Dost thou love me more than these?' "*

Such, my friends, are the claims of supremacy, and such the grounds on which they are supported! I shall first examine the few passages of Scripture, which are applied to the support of this supremacy, and then state various considerations bearing on the question before us, and tending to prove that the pretended supremacy of St. Peter, and the Papal supremacy supported by it are altogether unwarranted by scriptural authority.

1. I shall first direct your attention to the passages of Scripture adduced, for the purpose of supporting the Papal supremacy. All of them respect the supposed supremacy of St. Peter. The principal text is that in Matt. xvi. 18.—I shall cite the whole passage. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his DISCIPLES, saying, 'Whom do men say, that I the Son of man am?' And THEY said, 'Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.' He said unto them, 'But whom say YE, that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Blessed art thou, 'Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in 'Heaven. And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter,

* "The Grounds of the Old Religion." Sect. II. p. 88, 89.

*'and upon this rock, I will build my Church ;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against
it.* And I will give unto thee the keys of the
kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt
bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and
whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be
loosed in heaven.'*—(v. 13—19.)

From this quotation, it appears that the Saviour, when conversing with his disciples, was desirous of ascertaining what impression his miracles and discourses had produced on the public mind. This inquiry was intended to lead them to a distinct confession of their own views and convictions. The question for this purpose was general ; it was addressed to no individual disciple, but to the whole body. Peter, with the promptitude and ingenuousness that marked his general character, instantly answered the inquiry, and made that "good confession," which obtained the approbation and benediction of the Saviour. Here you will remember that the original name of Peter was *Simon*. From the account given by St John, Simon and his brother Andrew had been disciples of John the Baptist. Andrew was first introduced to the Messiah ; and afterwards informed his brother Simon. (*John i. 41.*) In consequence of this information, we are told by the Evangelist that Andrew "brought Simon to "Jesus ; and when Jesus beheld him, he said—
"Thou art Simon the Son of Jona : thou shalt be
called Cephas ;" which, adds the Evangelist, (for *Cephas* was a Syrio-Chaldaic term, and as he was writing in Greek, it was necessary to give the meaning of it) "is by interpretation a *Stone*." (*ο ερμηνεύται πέτρος.*) The word here rendered a

* Κάγῳ δε σοι λέγω, ὅτι συ εἶ πέτρος, καὶ επὶ ΤΑΥΤΗ Τῇ
ΠΕΤΡΑ ὀικοδομήσω με τὴν ἐκκλησίαν—κ. τ. λ.

Stone is literally the word *Peter*.* Now you will keep in mind, that the word Peter thus translated *a Stone* never occurs in the sacred

* The Author of "Sermons—for all the Sundays after Pentecost, with illustrations," has informed us, that till the confession recorded in Matt. xvi. 18, "the name of Peter had been Simon." "Jesus changed this into *Peter*, which signifies a *rock*, adding immediately, as a reason, 'because *on this rock* I will build my "Church.' Now whence," he inquires, "a new name, if he were not intended to have been personally pointed out? And, whence such a name, if he were not designed to be, personally distinguished from his brethren? Jesus says too upon *this rock*; and why should he say *this rock*, and not merely *a rock*, if Peter were not destined to be a foundation, distinct in some respect or other, from the rest of his fellow labourers? Certainly, just as the strong emblem—a *rock* is calculated to express the stability of the Church, so the demonstrative *this*, is with equal accuracy formed to point out either the individual or the spot upon which the sacred fabric is destined to repose." Vol. I. p. 320.

On this citation, I remark, that the writer has forgotten that Simon received his "new name," not when he made the confession recorded in Matthew, but at his first introduction to the Saviour. In the next place, it was not unusual to change or enlarge the names of persons.—The sons of Zebedee were called *Boanerges*, (the sons of thunder,) and it might as well be argued from this appellation, that none of the other disciples possessed any zeal or energy in their Master's cause, as endeavour to prove that the word Peter refers to some exclusive qualification or prerogative possessed by that Apostle. It is observed in the Lecture that the word *Peter* does not signify *a Rock*, and therefore it is not "the strong emblem" which this writer supposes it to be. Not one instance can be adduced of *πέτρος* signifying any thing but a 'stone or movable piece of rock.' It may be part of a foundation or a building; but not the foundation itself. He also mentions the demonstrative pronoun, *this*; but if Christ intended to have pointed out Peter to the rest of the disciples, as *exclusively* the foundation, he would not have used that demonstrative which would naturally lead them to think he meant *himself*. The whole interpretation is unnatural and forced; and evidently framed to meet the necessities of a precarious and unsubstantial hypothesis. The entire scope of Scripture is against it, whatever support it may derive from tradition and the Fathers! See further remarks on the subject in the Appendix. NOTE L.

volume, in any other sense than that of *a Stone* or *a piece of rock*. The word rendered *rock* is generally *Petra* ($\pi\epsilon\tau\rho\alpha$) and occurs in various parts of the New Testament. (Matt. vii. 24, 25, xxvii. 51, 60. Mark xv, 46. Luke vi. 48, viii. 6, viii. 13. 1 Cor. x. 4.) The apostle Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God; and in return, the Messiah, replies after pronouncing his benediction, “And I say unto thee Thou art a Stone.” It is not ‘thou art *the* Stone,’ much less ‘thou art *the Rock*,’ but simply an allusion to his name, *as relatively significant* of the confession he had just made, to which confession, on the truth confessed, he directly refers as *the rock* on which the Church is built. There is a change of the word which every attentive reader of the original will immediately perceive. Had our Lord meant that Peter was the foundation of the Church, he would have retained the same term, in both parts of the declaration: it would have been *Thou art a Stone, and on thee as a Stone, I will build my Church*; but it is far differently expressed. It is ‘Thou art,’ that is evidently, ‘thou art called *a stone*; and on *this rock*, the truth which thou hast confessed concerning myself, I will build my Church.’ It is highly probable that by some appropriate action, our Lord distinctly pointed out *himself*, as the object of the declaration.

In many parts of the sacred volume THE ROCK is a significant representation of the stability and unchangeableness of the divine character. “He is a rock and his way is perfect”—“Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges”—“The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock”—“The Lord is my rock and fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in him I will trust.” In the New Testament the Mes-

siah is frequently represented as the rock and the foundation on which his Church rests. It is expressly said by St. Paul, that “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”—1 Cor. iii. 11. Now this kind of language is never applied to any other individual. It is recorded indeed that Christians “are built upon the foundation of *the Apostles* and *Prophets*; (Eph. ii. 20.) but this most unequivocally refers not to any one or all of the prophets and apostles, *personally*, but to the truth which they made known in their predictions and declarations.—Hence it is immediately added—“Jesus Christ “himself being the chief corner stone; in or on “whom all the building fitly framed together “groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” The same explanation applies to a passage in the ‘Revelation,’ xxi. 14—“The wall of the city had “twelve foundations, and in them, the names of “the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” This refers to no personal and exclusive prerogatives on the part of one above the rest; there is no allusion to the apostle Peter as possessing any pre-eminent authority. If *he* had been the foundation of the Church *in any sense* different from that in which they were all its foundation, we might have expected to meet with this distinction clearly asserted, in such passages as these. But there is not the slightest reference to such a distinction: and the only rational interpretation conformable to scriptural analogy, is that which represents the Apostles, by their united and authoritative testimony, as the means of establishing and supporting the Christian Church. They were in an exclusive sense, the “ambassadors of Christ,” invested with his authority, and empowered by their credentials, to act as the representatives of their divine Master.

That the rock on which the Church is built was

not the apostle Peter, but the truth confessed by him, is confirmed by the caution given to the disciples, after our Lord had addressed him. It is said by the Evangelist, v. 20. "Then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ:" and it is added, from "that time forth, he began to shew unto his disciples, how he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." The reasons of this prohibition respecting their premature publication of his Messiahship, it is not difficult to ascertain. Their testimony at that time would not have been supported by those proofs and attestations which it afterwards possessed; they were not fully qualified for their apostolic office; and those events had not transpired which were requisite for the accomplishment of prophecy, and the complete developement of the Saviour's character. But why, "from that time forth," did our Lord's conversation principally respect his own sufferings, and resurrection, and the various proofs of his Messiahship, if the declaration to Peter respected his personal and exclusive supremacy? One might rather have expected that "from that time forth," the Saviour's instructions would have had a special reference to the power and "royalties" of St. Peter, the nature and extent of his prerogatives and the great duty on the part of the other disciples, of implicit submission to this privileged superior. Who would ever have expected that after this prodigious authority conferred upon one over all the apostolic college, that they should be found disputing among themselves 'Who should be the greatest?' Surely the question was settled long before; and if the disciples had not understood the meaning of "the rock," this would have been a proper occasion for the

fuller explanation of the mystery. But—no such explanation do we meet with; on the contrary, the Saviour condemns their ambition, sets before them “a little child,” and after this impressive illustration of the necessity of humility and condescension, tells them that “except they become as little children they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. xviii. 1—5.

Before I proceed to the other parts of this controverted passage, I shall confirm the preceding reasonings, by a few extracts from some of the most distinguished ecclesiastical authorities; authorities acknowledged by the Romanists themselves. The only point to be proved by these citations in this part of the argument, respects the meaning of the phrase “on this rock.”

“There is one immovable foundation of the faith,” says St. Hilary, “this one blessed rock, confessed by the mouth of Peter, ‘Thou art the Son of the living God.’”*

“Upon this rock,” says Chrysostom, “that is on the faith of his confession;” and in another place—“on this rock, not upon Peter, for he did not build his Church upon the man, but upon his faith.”† “Our Lord,” it is observed by Theodoret, “did suffer the first of the Apostles to be shaken, whose confession he had established as a prop and foundation of the Church.”‡ Theophylact remarks—“This con-

* Ήναυμ ergo est immobile fidei fundamentum, una hæc felix Petra, Petri ore confessa, ‘Tu es, &c. *Hilar. de' Trin.* li. 2.

†—πέτρα, τωτέσι τῇ πισει τῆς ὁμολογίας. *Chrys:* in Matt. xvi. 18.

—ἐκ εἶπεν επὶ τῷ πετρῷ· ετε γαρ επὶ τῷ ανθρώπῳ, ἀλλα επὶ την πισιν την εαυτού εκκλησιαν ὠκοδομήσε. *Ibid. Tom. 5. Orat. 163.*

‡—ὅ την ὁμολογία, οἷον τινα κρηπίδα καὶ θεμελιον τῆς εκκλησιας κατεπήξε, συνεχωρησε σαλευθῆναι. *Theod. Ep. 77.*

“fession which thou hast confessed shall be the foundation of the faithful.”* St. Augustin is equally explicit; in his sermon on the words—“upon this rock which thou hast confessed, upon this rock which thou hast known, saying, ‘Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,’ ‘I will build my Church; upon myself who am the Son of the living God will I build my Church, upon me will I build thee, not me, upon thee.”†

Here it must be acknowledged, that while the language of these eminent Fathers is so explicit and intelligible, there are others who give a different exposition of the passage. “The divines, schoolmen, and canonists of the Roman Communion,” says Dr. Barrow, “do not agree—though divers of the most learned among them do approve the interpretation of St. Chrysostom. Then how can so great a point of doctrine be firmly grounded on a place of so doubtful interpretation? How can any one be obliged to understand the words, according to their interpretation, which persons of so good sense, and so great authority do understand otherwise? With what modesty can they pretend that meaning to be clear which so perspicacious eyes could not discern therein? Why may I not excusably agree with St. Chrysostom, or St. Austin, in understanding the place? May I not reasonably oppose their judgment to the

* Αυτη ἡ ὁμολογια ἦν ὁμολογησας θεμελιον μελλει ειναι τῶν πισευοντῶν. *Theoph.* in loco.

† Super hanc petram, quam confessus es, super hanc petram quam cognovisti, dicens, Tu es Christus Filius Dei Vivi, ædificabo ecclesiam meam, super me ipsum, qui sum filius Dei Vivi ædificabo ecclesiam meam, super me ædificabo te, non me super te.

August. in Matt. xvi. 18. Serm. 13.

"opinion of any modern doctors; why consequently, may I not without blame, refuse their doctrine, as built upon this place, or disavow the goodness of this proof?"*

But the remaining part of the declaration to St. Peter demands our notice. It respects "the power of the keys, and binding and loosing." The expressions are evidently figurative, and their explanation must be sought for in the use of similar phraseology in the Jewish Scriptures. It is generally thought, even by the advocates of papal supremacy, that the grant of the "keys" and the power of "binding and loosing" refer to the same general authority in the spiritual administration of the Christian Church. This idea of the passage will be confirmed, if we attend to the structure and formation of "the key" used in ancient times and particularly amongst the Jews. "The keys of the ancients," says *Calmet*, an eminent scriptural lexicographer of the Roman Church, "were very different from ours; because their doors were closed generally with bands, and the keys served only to loosen and fasten these bands in a certain manner.—Jesus Christ gave St. Peter, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power of binding and loosing, i. e. of opening and shutting; for this frequently consisted as we have said in tying and untying."† Hence the key, like *the seals* in modern times, became the badge and emblem of official distinction. It was prophesied of *Eliakim*—"The key of the house of David, will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open." (Isa.

* Dr. Barrow's "Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy." Works. Vol. I. 581, 582. Fol. ed.

† Calmet's Dict. art. *key*.

xxii. 23). Bellarmine, the advocate of the personal infallibility of the Pope, cites this passage as a descriptive representation of the high-priest's office, to which he says Eliakim was raised, and which he considers as succeeded by the papal authority. But this misconception is obvious. Eliakim was not high-priest; he possessed neither sacerdotal nor regal power; his office was merely that of *a steward* over the royal family, to preside in its domestic economy, not by any absolute authority of his own, but under the jurisdiction of his sovereign. If it be objected that the explanation will apply to the special dignity of St. Peter, I remark, that all the Apostles are alike represented as "stewards of the mysteries of God," without the slightest allusion to any *head-steward* in the Christian economy.

The "key" was also among the Jews, the emblem of *admission to any kind of privilege*. Hence we read of the Pharisees withholding the "key of knowledge." In this sense of admission to privilege, I conceive, it exclusively belonged to St. Peter, to possess the keys of the kingdom of heaven. "Binding and loosing" were terms well known amongst the Jews, and meant "bidding and forbidding," "granting and refusing," "declaring lawful or unlawful."* This power conferred on St. Peter, was afterwards most distinctly conferred on all the Apostles. It is recorded, in Matt. xviii. 18, that our Lord said to all the Apostles—"Verily I say unto you, whatsoever

* "The phrases to *bind* and *loose* were Jewish, and most frequent in their writings. It belonged only to the teachers among the Jews to *bind* and *loose*. When the Jews set any apart to be a Preacher, they used these words, 'Take thou liberty to teach what is *bound*, and what is *loose*?'" *Strype's Preface to the Posthumous Remains of Dr. Lightfoot.* p. 38. See *Dr A. Clarke's Commentary*, in loc.

"YE shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ;
"and whatsoever YE shall loose on earth, shall be
"loosed in heaven." Thus all were invested with authority to state the obligations which were binding, and those which were repealed ; and to declare as the accredited ambassadors of Christ, what was lawful and what was unlawful. Facts recorded in the history of the primitive Churches, clearly illustrate the nature and extent of this apostolic prerogative. In consequence of the appeal from the Church of Antioch, to the Apostles at Jerusalem, it was necessary to ascertain, how far certain obligations which had obtained under the Mosaic economy were binding on the Gentile converts. The occasion and subject of that inquiry are minutely detailed in the xvth. chapter of the Acts of the Apostles ; and the result of their deliberation is related by the Evangelist—" It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things ; that ye abstain from meat offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication ; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." (Acts xv. 28, 29.) These prohibitions are represented, as "the decrees that were ordained of the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem :" and they shew how the Apostles exercised their power of binding and loosing. It is also particularly worthy of remark, that this apostolic rescript makes no special mention of Peter. He, indeed, after some time had been spent in "considering the matter," delivered the first recorded address on the occasion ; but it was by the "sentence" of the Apostle *James*, that the final decision was arrived at. It was by him, the particular prohibitions, afterwards recorded in the apostolic decree, were first distinctly specified (xv. 19, 20.) And in the decree itself, we find no

reference to Peter as possessing or exercising, any authority above the other members of that apostolic convention.

But though this eminent Apostle possessed no supremacy of *power* or *authority* over the other Apostles, I most frankly acknowledge that he obtained distinguished honour, from the full and explicit confession he delivered in answer to the inquiry of our Lord. This was the honour of *priority* in *first* “opening the door of faith”—in *first* preaching the gospel both to Jews and Gentiles; in *first* admitting the converts of each class to the privileges of the Christian dispensation. It was Peter who delivered that memorable discourse, by which three thousand Jews were added to the number of the disciples. It was Peter whom God directed by a special vision to preach to the Gentiles. To this the Apostle refers in the address just alluded to, Acts xv. 7,—“Peter rose up and said, ‘Men and brethren’ ye know how that God, a good while ago made choice among us, “that the Gentiles, *by my mouth*, should hear the “word of the gospel and believe.” While the “keys,” or the privilege of *first* admitting persons to the Christian Church was conferred only on Peter; *all* were afterwards invested with the power of “binding and loosing.”

“The kingdom of heaven” is the Church of God.—“Formerly,” says the eloquent and learned Bishop Horsley, “the Jewish Church was that “kingdom; it is now—the Christian Church.—“The true Church is represented in this text, “(Matt. xvi. 18, &c.) as in many passages of holy “writ, under the image of a walled city, to be “entered only at the gates. Under the Mosaic “economy these gates were shut, and particular “persons only, could obtain admittance—Is-“raelites by birth, or by legal incorporation.—

“ The locks of these gates were the rites of the
“ Mosaic law, which obstructed the entrance of
“ aliens. But after our Lord’s ascension, and the
“ descent of the Holy Ghost, the keys of the city
“ were given to St. Peter, by that vision which
“ taught him, and authorised him to teach others,
“ that all distinctions of one nation from another
“ were at an end. By virtue of this special com-
“ mission, the great Apostle applied the key, push-
“ ed back the bolt of the lock, and threw the gates
“ of the city open for the admission of the whole
“ Gentile world, in the instance of Cornelius and
“ his family. *To this, and to this only, our Lord*
“ *prophetically alludes, when he promises to St.*
“ *Peter the custody of the keys*—No authority over
“ the rest of the Apostles was given St. Peter, by
“ the promise made to him, in either, or in both
“ its branches; nor was any right conveyed to
“ him, which could descend from him to his
“ successors in any See. The promise was simply
“ a prediction, that he would be selected to be
“ the first instrument in a great work of Provi-
“ dence, which was of such a nature as to be
“ done once for all; and being done, it cannot be
“ repeated. The great Apostle fulfilled his com-
“ mission in his life time. He applied his key—
“ he turned back the lock, he loosed and he
“ bound. The gates of the kingdom of heaven
“ are thrown open—the ceremonial law *is abro-*
“ *gated*—the moral *is confirmed*, and the suc-
“ cessor of St. Peter can give neither furtherance
“ nor obstruction in the business.”*

This opinion of the privilege of *priority*, not *supremacy*, conferred upon the Apostle Peter, as the reward of his enlightened and explicit con-

* Horsley’s “Sermons.” Vol. I. p. 286—289. See Appendix.
NOTE M.

fection is not peculiar to the Protestant Church; nor is it adopted to meet the exigencies of a system. It accords with historic fact; and is confirmed by the interpretations of several ancient Fathers. *Jerome* and *Origen* sanction this exposition; but the most satisfactory agreement with the views here brought forward is to be found in the writings of *Tertullian*. He expressly asserts that it belonged to Peter to be “the first man” in preaching the gospel, and conveying the benefits of salvation to believers; and he remarks, “so ‘the event teaches—the Church was built on ‘him, that is, by him; he introduced the key—‘he, in the administration of Christian baptism, ‘did first unlock the entrance into the kingdom ‘of heaven.”*

The other passage adduced in favour of Peter’s supremacy is in *John* xxi. 15—17. It is the common opinion of Roman Catholic writers, that the charge “feed my lambs—feed my sheep” was given exclusively to Peter; and that by virtue of this charge, he was invested with *supreme pastoral authority* over ALL the flock of Christ; not only over Christians in general, but over the rest of the Apostles themselves. But I will give you a specimen of modern declamation on this subject. After citing the passage from St. John, a learned divine of their Church remarks, “in the first place, “Jesus immediately and personally, points out “the individual to whom he addresses his dis-“course. *Simon*, he says; and to prevent the “possibility of conceiving that he might perhaps “mean *Simon the brother of Thaddeus*, he adds, “*Simon son of Jonas* (or *John* as the preacher

* “Sic enim exitus docet, in ipso ecclesia extracta est, id est “per ipsum; ipse clavem imbuīt; ipse primus, in Christi bap-“tismo reseravit aditum cœlestis regni, &c. *Tertul.* de Pud; 21.

" renders it.) It is consequently plain, that he
" does not here intend to address himself to all
" the Apostles. This also is plain from Peter's
" answers; for just as the questions were put to
" Peter only, so Peter only answers them in his
" own name.—Jesus, then asks Peter whether he
" loved him—or rather whether he loved him
" more than the rest of the Apostles who were
" present: *Lovest thou me more than these?* Now,
" whence so singular an interrogation—whence
" this demand of a love superior to that of the
" other Apostles—unless that the nature of the
" office or dignity which he was going to confer
" upon him, was of a nature also superior to
" theirs? Ingenuity can conceive no other cause
" for such difference of love, but such difference
" of office, or such super-eminence of dignity.
" And then too, he three times puts to him the
" question, if he love him? Why so singular a
" question—for Jesus already knew, as Peter re-
" marks, the sincerity of his love?—And above
" all, why so singularly repeated—for nothing
" similar occurs, in the whole series of the sacred
" text? Without doubt, as the whole conduct of
" Jesus is here uncommon, it could not be de-
" signed to express merely the common commis-
" sion to teach and reform the world. But, ob-
" serve now the answers of Jesus. In reply to
" the two first assurances of Peter, that he loved
" him, he said, on each occasion, "*Feed my*
" '*lambs.*' After the third assurance, he added,
" '*Feed my sheep.*' In the holy scriptures, the
" faithful are, frequently designated under the
" figure and appellation of a flock. Jesus em-
" ploys this figure, on this occasion; but he di-
" vides the flock into two distinct and separate
" parts—into *lambs*, by which he means the ordi-
" nary faithful—and *sheep*, by which he means

" the pastors of the faithful ; for just as the lamb
" is nourished by the sheep or its dam, so are
" the faithful fed by their pastors with the word
" of God. Now, Jesus confers upon Peter the
" care and superintendance over both these parts,
" *feed my lambs; feed my sheep.*—That there is
" really question in the words '*feed my lambs,*'
" of care or superintendance over the faithful,
" this is a circumstance not even contested by
" our Protestant adversaries. They all allow,
" that they are synonymous to the order *govern*
" *my faithful; watch over the Church.* There-
" fore, admitting that there is any meaning in the
" distinction which Jesus makes between the two
" portions of his fold, it evidently follows, that,
" as by the words *feed my lambs*, he gives Peter
" a commission to govern the faithful, by the
" terms *feed my sheep*, he gives him a jurisdiction
" over the pastors of the faithful. Whoever re-
" jects this distinction, makes Jesus speak unin-
" telligibly ; and whoever rejects this interpreta-
" tion of the distinction, takes away from ana-
" logy its obvious bearings, and from words their
" natural import. Christ compares his Church
" to a flock—he divides the flock into two parts,
" —and he gives Peter the superintendance over
" the whole, *feed my lambs, feed my sheep.* The
" consequence is, that since he gives Peter a su-
" perintendance over his whole flock, he confers
" upon him a jurisdiction distinct from that of
" the rest of the Apostles—a jurisdiction more
" enlarged than theirs—a jurisdiction reaching
" over the whole body of the church, over the
" taught and the teachers, over the governed and
" the governors."*

* "Sermons on various religious and moral subjects, for all the Sundays after Pentecost, with illustrations." 2 vols.—8vo.

The first remarks I have to make, on this “singular” specimen of exposition, respects the reason of our Lord’s inquiry to Peter—“ Lovest thou me more than these ?” No other reason can be assigned by our opponents, than “ the nature “ of the office or dignity which he was going to “ confer upon him !” Here is at once an assumption of the thing to be proved ; an assumption altogether contradicted by the previous history and subsequent character of the Apostle. We have not however to go far back into that history, to find out the true occasion of this “ singular interrogation.” St. Matthew informs us, that after our Lord had foretold some of the most affecting circumstances of his approaching sufferings, and particularly the desertion of the disciples, “ Peter “ answered and said—Though all men shall be “ offended because of thee, yet will I never be “ offended ; Jesus said unto him, Verily I say “ unto thee, That this night, before the cock “ crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said “ unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet “ will I not deny thee !” (*Matt. xxvi. 33—35.*) Comparing this confession of extraordinary and pre-eminent attachment to the Saviour, with the subsequent conduct of Peter, we can easily account for the inquiry of our Lord, and for the repetition of that inquiry. No other solution is

1810, Vol. 1. p. 124, 125. These are the Sermons referred to in a preceding note. I find they are the production of the Rev. John Fletcher, the predecessor of the Catholic Priest whose Lectures against Protestantism, occasioned the delivery of those, which are now presented to the public. The *local* circulation and influence of these volumes have occasioned my particular allusion to them. The truly respectable character of their author, has given them a considerable degree of celebrity in his own communion : but I am compelled to observe, that for misrepresentation and sophistry, they are unequalled amongst the modern defences of the Roman Catholic Religion.

requisite. It was not for the purpose of satisfying Christ himself; for “he knew what was in man,” and therefore was well acquainted with his sincerity. But his affection had not stood the test of trial; he had denied his Lord; the other disciples knew it; and he who resolved to manifest the greatest devotion to Christ, was inferior to all the rest in constancy and attachment. It might be expected that some reference would be made to this instance of defection. Our Lord does not *directly* allude to it; but there is a point in the inquiry that must have been immediately felt by all the disciples and especially by Peter. For their sakes, it was necessary to make this indirect allusion, that every suspicion of the sincerity of their colleague might be removed; and that they might be assured of his complete restoration to the Saviour’s confidence and affection. If the question had respected the proof of superior attachment for the sake, (as this writer insinuates) of conferring on him “super-eminence of dignity,” there would naturally have been something in the manner of Christ on that occasion, expressive of his intention. In that case, Peter would not have been *grieved* when he was “asked the third time;” but he would have considered it as an *additional* confirmation of the supremacy bestowed upon him. Whatever construction our ingenious expositor may put on the passages, it is clear that Peter did not so understand the Saviour’s charge. If asking him the question twice had been designed to prepare him for his “enlarged jurisdiction;” and if the charge to “feed the lambs and the sheep” had been conceived by the Apostle to mean—“govern all the faithful”—exercise authority over the “taught and the teachers, over the governed and the governors,” it is not natural to suppose that Peter

would have been “grieved” at the repetition of the question. It would confirm his claims, render “the difference of office” more obvious, and prevent more effectually all future litigation on the subject. It is not usual for persons to be “grieved” at questions that respect the communication of power, and the increase of authority. Nothing can be more evident than that Peter’s grief was the result of those humiliating recollections, which the inquiry excited, and which led him to conceive that the Saviour whom he had denied, doubted the genuineness of his professions. Nothing is more painful to an ingenuous mind, than to be suspected of insincerity.

But in the next place, what is the natural import of the commission given to Peter on this occasion: “Feed my lambs—feed my sheep?” I shall not now notice the exposition of the word “feed,” as if it were equivalent with the word “govern;” but direct your attention to the “singular” interpretation of the two distinct objects of this sacred charge. By the “lambs” we are to understand the lay members of the Christian Church, and by “the sheep” the pastors—because as a lamb is nourished by its dam, so are the faithful nourished by their pastors! The “lambs” mean the sheep,” and the “sheep” mean “the shepherds”!! It is unfortunate for this expositor, to whom the analogy and the sense are so obvious, that there is no various reading to support his new version of the text! If any earthly monarch had communicated his instructions in such ambiguous language, we should pronounce him, ill qualified to confer authority, and still more incompetent to explain the extent of its jurisdiction. But is there no construction of our Saviour’s language more conformable to its import, and

more accordant with the analogy of the figure than this unnatural exposition? How frequently in the New Testament, are the ministers of Christ compared to *shepherds*. He is called “the good Shepherd,” the “chief Shepherd;” and under his supreme pastoral government, inferior shepherds exercise their pastoral care. When one of these shepherds was exhorted to *feed the lambs*, the charge clearly respects the young and inexperienced of the flock; and there was a special propriety in directing the penitent and restored Apostle, to shew peculiar attention to those who would be most liable to “err and stray” from the fold. The “sheep” as distinguished from the “lambs,” presented a fit emblem, not only of the flock in general, but of those who had attained greater maturity in their Christian profession. The charge was repeated, to impress more strongly on the mind of Peter, the necessity of being faithful and diligent in the discharge of his apostolic duties, that he might by such means give the most satisfactory proof of his love to the Saviour, and his devotion to the sacred cause.

Our Lord, before this conversation with Peter, had given *all* the Apostles their commission; and had said to them—“as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you.” He had commanded them to “go into all the world—to preach the gospel to every creature—to teach or disciple all nations—and to instruct them to observe whatsoever he had commanded.” He gave to each, and to all without distinction, the same gracious assurance of his presence and benediction: “Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Is there any supremacy conferred upon Peter in this commission, and in these premises? Is there any intimation of the duty of subjection to

him? Not a single passage can be adduced to afford the shadow of a pretext for this supreme jurisdiction.

" In confirmation of this doctrine of supremacy," says the learned Dr. Barrow, " they do " draw forth a whole shoal of testimonies, con- " taining divers prerogatives as they call them, of " St. Peter; so very sharp sighted indeed they " are, that in every remarkable accident befalling " him, in every action performed by him, or to " him, or about him, they can descry some ar- " gument or shrewd insinuation of his pre-emi- " nence; especially being aided by the glosses of " some fanciful expositor. From the change of his " name; from his walking on the sea; from his " miraculous draught of fishes; from our Lord's " praying for him, that his faith might not fail; " from his advising him to pay the tribute for " them both; from his first appearing to him after " the resurrection; from the prediction of his mar- " tyrdom; from sick persons being cured by his " shadow; from his being prayed for by the " Church; from St. Paul's going to visit him;— " from these passages, they deduce or confirm his " authority. Now in earnest is not this, stout " arguing? Is it not egregious modesty, for such a " point to allude (adduce) such proofs? What cause " may not be countenanced by such rare fetches? " Who would not suspect the weakness of that " opinion which is fain to use such forces, in its " maintenance? In fine, is it honest or conscion- " able dealing so to wrest or play with the Holy " Scriptures, pretending to derive thence proofs, " where there is no shew of consequence?

" To be even with them, I might assert the " primacy of *St. John*, and to that purpose " might allege his prerogatives, which indeed " seem greater than those of *St. Peter*; namely,

" that he was the beloved disciple, that he leaned
" on our Lord's breast ; that St. Peter, not pre-
" suming to ask our Lord a question, desired *him*
" to do it, as having a more special confidence
" with our Lord ; that St. John did higher service
" to the Church and all posterity by writing not
" only more epistles, but also a most divine gos-
" pel, and a sublime prophecy concerning the
" state of the Church ; that St. John *did outrun*
" *Peter and came first to the Sepulchre*, (in which
" passage, such acute devisers would find out
" marvellous signification;) that St. John did out-
" live all the Apostles, and thence was most fit to
" be universal Pastor. Thus I might, by preroga-
" tives and passages very notable, infer the superi-
" ority of St. John to St. Peter, in imitation of
" their reasoning ; but I am afraid they would
" scarce be at the trouble to answer one seriously,
" but would think it enough to say I trifled ;
" wherefore let it suffice for me, in the same man-
" ner to put off their levities of discourse."*

2. I shall now proceed to state various considera-
tions, bearing on the question before us, and
tending to prove that the pretended supremacy of
Peter, and the Papal Supremacy supported by it,
are altogether unwarranted by scriptural autho-
rity. In illustrating these arguments, I wish you
to keep in mind, their *cumulative* force. What-
ever weight may be attached to each separate con-
sideration, it is the conclusion resulting from the
whole, that to my own apprehension, is so deci-
sive and satisfactory in the present inquiry.

i. In the first place, our Lord most expressly
condemned all notions of personal superiority,
claimed by one disciple above the rest. I shall
cite the passages, and leave them to make their own

* Dr. Barrow's 'Treatise,' &c. Works. Vol. I. p. 589.

impression on your minds. " And there was also " a strife among them, which of them should be " accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, " The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over " them: and they that exercise authority upon " them are called benefactors. But *ye shall not* " *be so*: but he that is greatest among you, let " him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as " he that doth serve. For whether *is* greater, he " that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not " he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as " he that serveth. Ye are they which have con- " tinued with me in my temptations. And I ap- " point unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath " appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink " at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones " judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (*Luke xxii.* " 24—30.) And he came to Capernaum: and " being in the house he asked them, What was it " that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? " But they held their peace: for by the way they " had disputed among themselves, who *should be* " the greatest. And he sat down, and called the " twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire " to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and ser- " vant of all." (*Mark ix.* 33—35.) " Be not ye " called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* " Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no " man your father upon the earth: for one is your " father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called " masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ." (*Matt. xxii.* 8—10.)

ii. We find no allusions in the New Testament to such an office, as that attributed to St. Peter, and claimed by the Bishops of Rome as his successors. There is a passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which St. Paul informs us that when our Lord "ascended on high—he gave some,

" apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of saints," &c. (iv. 11.) There is a still more remarkable passage in the 1st Epistle to the *Corinthians* xii. 28—30, in which the gradations of office are very distinctly marked ; but in which there is no mention of one individual above the rest of the first class : " And God hath set or established some in the Church ; *first*, apostles ; *secondarily*, prophets ; *thirdly*, teachers ; after that miracles, &c. &c. are all apostles ? are all prophets ? are all teachers ?" &c. If the Apostle Paul had conceived that St. Peter possessed by divine authority, a personal supremacy over the rest of the Apostles, it is inexplicable, that in a statement of ecclesiastical offices, a statement too, of more than ordinary minuteness of detail, in which there is a classification of such offices and powers, there should be no distinct reference to St. Peter, as Head of the whole, and " Vicar of Christ upon earth !" Suppose a writer of the present day were describing the gradations of Church dignity in the Roman hierarchy, would he content himself with saying —" *first*, bishops ?" Would he not commence with the apostolic See of Rome, assert its primacy and supremacy, and point out its main distinction, and pre-eminent authority ? It cannot be imagined, with any shew of consistency, that such a supremacy was known to exist in the case of Peter, at the time when the Apostle Paul addressed the Corinthian Church ; and if this inference be justly supported by the silence of the Apostle, it is an incontrovertible argument against the Papal Supremacy.

iii. We meet with no instance of the exercise of this pretended supremacy, in the historical records of the New Testament ; but on the contrary, with

some accounts altogether inconsistent with the supposition.

If Christ had been understood by the Apostles to have conferred supremacy of honour and jurisdiction on St. Peter, we might naturally look for some facts in the subsequent history of the Apostles, which would explain the nature and extent of this jurisdiction. It is unaccountable to suppose an office of pre-eminent authority bestowed on a man, and in the history of that man's life and character to find no reference to the exercise of that authority. And yet to this absurdity are those reduced, who vindicate the notion of the Apostle Peter's supremacy! Let them specify if they can, one single instance of authority exercised by him *over the rest of the Apostles, or one act of authority over the Church in general, greater than what was actually exercised by the other Apostles.* It has already been remarked, that though St. Peter made the first speech recorded in the account of the apostolic convention at Jerusalem, it was the "sentence" of *James* which determined the dispute, and his decision was adopted in the very phraseology of the apostolic decree. In the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, "James, Cephas, and John," are said to be the "pillars" of the Church at Jerusalem.* There were disputes among the Corinthians, on account of their partialities and predilections; one preferring Paul, another Apollos, another Cephas. If Cephas possessed any personal supremacy over the rest,

* As our opponents attach much importance to the name of Peter being mentioned *first*, on many occasions, this passage, for the same reason, (if it were any reason at all,) might be employed to prove the supremacy of *James*! It is probable as Dr. Lardner has observed, that seniority might often lead to precedence though it could never be sufficient to warrant the notion of supremacy.

it is strange that his special admirers, did not avail themselves of this honourable distinction; it is still more strange, when a certain schismatical faction in that church, attempted to invalidate St. Paul's apostolic authority, that he should assert his equality in point of authority and jurisdiction with the rest of the Apostles, and even with "the *chiefest* Apostles." "I suppose I was not a whit behind the *very chiefest* Apostles:" (2 Cor. xi. 5.) and again in xii. chapter v. 11. "in nothing am I behind the *very chiefest* Apostles."* By the chief Apostles, it is most probable St. Paul meant "James, Peter, and John;" though whatever superiority their talents or influence or station might give them in the Christian Church, it involved in it no superior jurisdiction and authority. In opposition to all ideas of exclusive prerogatives possessed by one or by all of the Jerusalem Apostles, St. Paul asserts his own authority and jurisdiction to be equal to theirs:

* Our translation of the former text "*I suppose*," is rather ambiguous, from the modern use of the term, and is not equivalent to the meaning of *λογιζομαι*. It is the same word which occurs in Rom. viii. 18. and is rendered more accurately "*I reckon*." The Vulgate translation *existimo* (I think) agrees with this, and occurs in both places. This latter version does not however preserve the force of the original in the latter part of the text— "*nihil me minus fecisse magnis apostolis.*" (*λογιζομαι γαρ μηδεν ὑπερηκεται των ὑπερ λιαν αποσολων.*) The rendering of Erasmus is preferable, "*I was in nothing inferior to the eminent Apostles;*" (*eximiis apostolis*) but "*summis apostolis*" or the '*very chiefest*,' according to our own translation, best expresses the force of *ὑπερ λιαν*, in which the notion of *super-excellence* is strongly conveyed. There can be no doubt that by the chief Apostles, St. Paul meant "Peter, James, and John," whom he represents in Gal. ii. 9. as "*pillais*." Equality of authority and order, by no means implies equality of talent and success. "As one star differeth from another star in glory," so might the Apostles differ in attainments and in influence; and corresponding diversity has existed in all ages, amongst those who in all other respects were equal.

he was *in nothing behind them*; therefore none of them possessed supremacy, but were truly “fellow-labourers together.”

The notion of Peter’s supremacy is still more clearly disproved, by a circumstance mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians. To render the argument derived from this passage more obvious and intelligible, it is requisite to advert to the state of the Galatic Churches, as far as it can be ascertained from the epistle addressed to them. It appears that a Judaizing faction were endeavouring to “pervert the gospel of Christ” in that district. They attempted in opposition to the apostolic decree, to blend the rites of the Mosaic economy with the Christian institution. They were particularly anxious to revive the obligation of circumcision. Aware of their special obnoxiousness to the Apostle Paul, it seems they endeavoured by various insinuations to invalidate his apostolic authority; and because he was not of the *first twelve*, and had not been one of those who associated, with the disciples, “from the beginning of the gospel,” they represented his authority as inferior to that of the other Apostles. This is evident from the circumstantial details given in the first and second chapters of his epistle, by which he proves—that *his authority was derived immediately from Christ himself*—that *he entered on his apostolic office as soon as he was converted, without a personal conference with any of the Apostles*—that *three years elapsed before he saw the Apostle Peter*—that *he had received a special commission to be the Apostle of the uncircumcision, or to preach to the Gentiles, from the same authority which ordained Peter to be the Apostle of the circumcision*—and that *the Apostles at Jerusalem when Paul visited the place, at a subsequent period, distinctly recognised his au-*

thority. (Ga. i. 11—23. ii. 1—9.) It appears that after Paul had been at Jerusalem, he met Peter at Antioch, when the circumstance before referred to, took place. I shall cite the passage : “ But when Peter was come to Antioch, “ I withstood him to the face, because he was to “ be blamed. For before that certain came from “ James, he did eat with the Gentiles ; but when “ they were come, he withdrew and separated “ himself, fearing them which were of the cir- “ cumcision. And the other Jews dissembled “ likewise with him ; insomuch that Barnabas “ also was carried away with their dissimulation. “ But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, “ according to the truth of the gospel, I said “ unto Peter before them all ; if thou being a “ Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and “ not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the “ Gentiles, to live as do the Jews ? ” (ii. 11—14.)

“ It is evident from this passage that Paul, so far from acknowledging any supremacy in Peter, when he met with him in the same city, finding that he had been acting with dissimulation, publicly rebuked him. And Peter did not attempt to justify himself, although he might have found very plausible reasons for his conduct ; he felt that it was condemned by the spirit of God, speaking in Paul, and he did not resist him. Now let any candid man say, which of these two acted as the superior. Peter follows a certain line of conduct towards the Gentiles ; Paul comes, and without consulting Peter upon it, or appealing to the other Apostles, by the wisdom given him from above, judges it to be wrong, and by the authority committed to him, publicly withstands Peter, rebukes him, and then records the transaction in an epistle regarded even by the Church of Rome as written under the influence of

inspiration."* If the circumstances of this case had been reversed, and Peter had reproved Paul, it would have been cited as a triumphant and an incontrovertible demonstration of Peter's supremacy. But as it now stands, it is impossible to reconcile the fact with that unsupported assumption.

It is recorded in the Acts, (viii. 14, 15.) that when the "Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, *they sent unto them Peter and John*--that they might "receive the Holy Ghost." If Peter possessed or exercised supreme jurisdiction over his brethren, is it probable that *they* would have sent *him* on this special commission? The circumstance, and the account of it, are on the principle of "pre-eminent dignity," alike inexplicable.

It is also inexplicable on this same principle, that Paul, when writing to the Church at Rome, should never advert to the exclusive privilege they possessed, in having for their bishop, the Head-Apostle, the Vicegerent of Christ, and in the communication of supreme ecclesiastical power to the future bishop of their Church in succession, and for ever! It is inexplicable, that Peter himself, when writing to the Churches two catholic or general epistles, should advance nothing that might lead them to acknowledge his investiture with this authority.† In the latter of these epistles, he informs the Churches, that he

* The Rev. James Carlile's "Examination of the arguments for the pre-eminency of the Roman Catholic Episcopacy, adduced by the Rev. John Ryan," &c. p. 47.

† It is particularly worthy of notice, that in the first Epistle of Peter, there is a distinct allusion to *Christ alone*, as the foundation of the Church. He is called—a living stone; and believers are represented as "built up, a spiritual house" on this sure foundation. (1 Pet. ii. 4—7.)

was “shortly to put off his tabernacle,” and that he would “endeavour that after his decease, they might have these things in remembrance,” and yet he makes no reference to his successor in ecclesiastical supremacy! He calls himself with great humility an “elder,” and exhorts the elders of the Churches, to a diligent discharge of pastoral duties; but not the slightest allusion to his own pre-eminence, occurs in these apostolic charges.

iv. Granting, for the sake of argument, that St. Peter did possess a primacy or supremacy of power and authority over the other Apostles, there is no scriptural proof of its being any thing more than a *personal* supremacy, vested solely and exclusively in himself, and terminating at his death: and if it were still further granted, that the apostolic supremacy were designed to be *continued* in the Church, there is no rational or scriptural proof, why the bishops of Rome, rather than any other place where the Apostle Peter exercised his ministry, should possess this ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The strongest considerations have already been adduced to prove, that the Apostles had no successors in that office which was peculiarly their own. They possessed the *exclusive* power of conferring “the gift of the Holy Ghost,” or investing others with miraculous agency; and we meet with no reference whatever to the continuance of their office. It naturally included in it all inferior offices; and the Apostles could therefore act as pastors or bishops wherever they resided. But it does not appear that they ever remained for a long time in one place. Their office required frequent changes; they were employed in planting new churches, and visiting those they had already established. The Apostle Peter was for some time at Antioch; he was before that period, at

Jerusalem; and there is no proof from ecclesiastical tradition, that he resided at Rome any considerable time. That he suffered martyrdom at Rome, is the testimony of early writers; but this is the only fact in reference to Peter's connection with the Roman Church, on which we can rely with confidence.*

"If our lawyers," says the venerable Archbishop Usher, "examine the Pope's title to apostleship, as they would try an ordinary man's title to a piece of land, they might easily find a number of flaws and defects therein. For, first it would be inquired—whether the apostleship was not ordained by our Saviour Jesus Christ, as a special commission, which being personal only, was to determine, (i. e. terminate) with the death of the Apostles. For howsoever, at their first

* "Many ancient writers have said that Peter was crucified at Rome while Nero persecuted the Christians. And their opinion has been espoused by learned men, both Papists and Protestants. Some, however, particularly Scaliger, Salmasius, Fred. Spaahem, and others, deny that Peter ever was at Rome. If the reader wishes to see the evidence from antiquity, on which Peter's having been at Rome, rests, he will find it fully set forth by Lardner, (Can. vol. iii. ch. 18.) who concludes his inquiry as follows: "This is the general, uncontradicted, disinterested testimony of ancient writers in the several parts of the world, Greeks, Latins, Syrians.. As our Lord's prediction concerning the death of Peter is recorded in one of the four Gospels, it is very likely that Christians would observe the accomplishment of it, which must have been in some place. And about this place, there is no difference among Christian writers of ancient times. Never any other place was named beside Rome; nor did any other city ever glory in the martyrdom of Peter.—It is not for our honour, nor for our interest, either as Christians or Protestants, to deny the truth of events, ascertained by early and well attested tradition. If any make an ill use of such facts, we are not accountable for it. We are not from a dread of such abuses, to overthrow the credit of all history, the consequence of which would be fatal."—Macknight's "Preface to the epistles of Peter; in his Translation of the apostolical epistles." Vol. v. p. 419.

" entry into the execution of this commission, we
 " find that *Matthias* was admitted to the apostle-
 " ship in the room of *Judas*:* Yet afterwards
 " when *James the brother of John*, was slain by
 " *Herod*, we do not read that any other was sub-
 " stituted in his place. Nay, we know that the
 " Apostles generally, left no successors, in this
 " kind, neither did any of the Bishops, (he of
 " Rome only excepted,) that sate in those famous
 " churches, wherein the Apostles exercised their
 " ministry, challenge an apostleship, or *universal*
 " *bishoprick*, by virtue of that succession.

" It would secondly, therefore be inquired, what
 " sound evidence they can produce to show that
 " one of the company was to hold the apostleship,
 " as it were *in fee* for himself and his successors
 " for ever; and that the other eleven should hold
 " the same for term of life only. Thirdly, if this
 " state of perpetuity was to be cast upon one, how
 " came it to fall upon *St. Peter*, rather than *St.*
John, WHO OUTLIVED ALL THE REST OF HIS
 " FELLOWS; and so, as a surviving *feo-fee* had the
 " fairest right to retain the same in himself, and
 " his successors for ever? Fourthly, if that state
 " were wholly settled upon St. Peter, seeing
 " the Romanists themselves acknowledge, that he
 " was Bishop of *Antioch*, before he was Bishop of
 " Rome; we require them to shew, why so great
 " an inheritance as this, should descend to the
 " younger rather than the elder, according to the
 " ordinary manner of descents? Especially, see-
 " ing Rome hath little else to alledge for this pre-
 " ferment, but only that St. Peter was crucified in
 " it: which was a very slender reason to move the
 " Apostle so to respect it."†

* See Appendix. NOTE N.

† Extract from Archbishop Usher's Speech in the Castle Cham-
 ber, Dublin, Nov. 22, 1622. (*Dr. Parr's Life of Usher*. p. 23.)

In this citation, there is a special reference to the circumstance of St. John's surviving the Apostle Peter. On the principle of supremacy descending, as the Roman Catholics assert, to the Bishop of Rome on Peter's death, they have this strange and anomalous fact to explain—that a pastor over one church—a mere local bishop—*Linus* as they pretend, was the *supreme, visible Head of the Church—the Vicar of Christ—and the Vicegerent of Heaven*, over the venerable *Apostle John*—John the “beloved disciple”—the only surviving Apostle—an evangelist—a prophet—and whose sacred writings form the conclusion of the Canon of Scripture:—over this man, thus crowned with glory in the service of the Church, the pastor of the Church of Rome exercises supreme authority and jurisdiction! To use a military illustration, the captain of a single company, is actually invested with higher authority in that very office, than a general of the army! Monstrous absurdity! Let those receive it whose faith is credulity, and whose credulity is faith!

It appears that according to the reasonings and arguments in defence of Papal Supremacy, that all this tremendous authority rests immediately on the proof of *direct succession* from the Apostle Peter. Ministerial authority and the validity of ministerial acts are made to depend on this succession. Now what scriptural directions have we on this subject of succession? We have very minute delineation of the character and qualifications requisite in pastors and deacons; while not a word is found on the mode of electing a successor to the chair of St. Peter. Under the Mosaic economy a distinct and separate tribe was chosen for the Priesthood, and a particular family for the line of the High-Priesthood. It might be expected that He who was “greater than Moses in all his house,”

would have furnished his disciples with some explicit instructions on this important point; but not a word is to be found on the subject! According to the Romanists, whatever affects the proof of the Papal succession from St. Peter, affects the validity of ordinances and sacraments in the Church. It remains for them, to explain away the conclusion, naturally arising out of the fact, that at one period there were two Popes, the one residing at *Rome* and the other at *Avignon* who spent their time in anathematising each other! Where was then the seat and centre of Catholic unity, and *apostolicity*, as they term it? "During what, Roman Catholics themselves call the 'great schism, (from A. D. 1378 to 1417) there were two, and at one time three rival Popes, cursing each other, and their respective adherents, each claiming infallibility, and filling Europe with the misery of their contentions!"*

vi. But I conclude, by adverting to the impossibility on the part of any uninspired man, of sustaining the office of *personal supremacy* over the whole Christian Church, so as to discharge the duties connected with it. What "*Atlantean shoulders*" can be found, able to bear such a burden! If the diocese of a modern bishop involve in it such an awful responsibility, what must attach to a superintendance over all the dioceses of the Catholic Church? If one man be *supreme*, this supremacy must be actually parcelled out in separate portions, amongst the principal members of his ecclesiastical court: and are *nuncios*, and *legates* and *cardinals* partakers of apostolic supremacy? Did Jesus Christ invest St. Peter with pre-eminence, over the rest of his disciples, and then leave him, to call in their assistance in discharg-

* See Appendix, Note O.

ing the duties of that pre-eminence? The supposition is a reflection on the wisdom of the Saviour; and yet in this reflection are those indulging, who imagine, that the Papal Supremacy is warranted by the authority of *Him* who, after all, has made no adequate provision for the competent discharge of its duties; but has created an office, of such extent and jurisdiction, that no living mortal can fill it!

In addition to these general considerations, I might remind you of that awful prediction which is recorded in 2nd. Epistle to the Thessalonians. (ii. 3. 4.) "LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU BY ANY MEANS; FOR THAT DAY (the day of Christ's second coming) SHALL NOT COME, EXCEPT THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST, AND THAT MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED THE SON OF PERDITION; WHO OPPOSETH AND EXALTETH HIMSELF ABOVE ALL THAT IS CALLED GOD, OR THAT IS WORSHIPPED; SO THAT HE, AS GOD, SITTETH IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, SHEWING HIMSELF THAT HE IS GOD." It will be the object of future discussion to prove that this apostolic prophecy, taken in all its connection, respects, not any individual bishop of the Roman see, but the system of ecclesiastical domination, which originated in the ambitious spirit displayed even in some of the early Christians; which deified human authority in religious matters; which led to the assumption of exclusive prerogatives in the Christian Church; which directly interfered with the rights of conscience and the authority of God himself; and which was cherished and supported in its destructive progress by the principle of supremacy, and the continuance of that supremacy in the bishops of the Roman Church. Combine all these considerations, and then, my friends, reject if you can, the inference they naturally and obviously

warrant. Contemplate the Character of Christ—the genius of his religion—the opposition of its leading doctrines to secular pomp and policy—the humility of his Apostles—the total absence of all historic fact with respect to any exercise of supremacy on the part of one Apostle over the rest—the mighty system of domination which has arisen from the influence of this assumed supremacy—the physical impossibility of discharging its pretended functions—the absurdity of supposing that Christ would establish an office in his Church which could not in the nature of things be fulfilled—the application of prophecy to its rise, progress, and final termination—contemplate all these considerations and facts together, and you will derive from the entire series, an argument of irresistible force, amounting to all the certainty of moral demonstration.

Rejoice, my Christian friends, that HE IS THE ONLY “ HEAD OF THE CHURCH,” who has “all power in heaven and on earth;” who has promised his spiritual presence “wherever two or three are gathered together in his name;” whose authority is the only warrant and rule of Christian fellowship; and whose gracious influence, produces substantial unity of principle, aim, and character, amongst all his true disciples. The union of which our opponents boast, is in its elements and results, a political union; the incorporation of an extended hierarchy under an ecclesiastical prince, who holds his court in the “eternal city,” and supports his dignity by worldly splendour and military force. Is this “a kingdom NOT OF THIS WORLD?” Can the supporters of this kingdom, exclaim, “the weapons of our warfare are NOT CARNAL!” Let the history of the papal court, and the systematic intolerance of the Roman Church answer these inquiries. Let the inquisi-

tions sanctioned by pontifical authority—the persecutions carried on under that same authority, by ‘most Christian’ and ‘most Catholic’ monarchs—the spirit and temper pervading those countries, where the uncounteracted influence of popery prevails—testify how far the Papal Supremacy accords with the genius of the gospel; how far it illustrates the principles of his religion who was “meek and lowly in heart,” and deserves to be entitled in its character and operations, apostolic! Remember, Christians, that the only *legitimate succession* from the Apostles, consists in a practical conformity to the institutions they ordained, and the spirit, they inculcated. Let us be thankful, that the midnight of superstition is over, and the thick darkness passed away, that once brooded over our isle, and spread around it moral desolation! The spell which once enslaved our country, is dissolved by the light of liberty, and the radiance of truth; and the fetters of that spiritual tyranny are, I trust, broken for ever!

“STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY
WHEREWITH CHRIST HAS MADE YOU FREE, AND
BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE
OF BONDAGE.”

LECTURE IV.

ON TRANSUBSTANTIATION AND THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

IT is the province of reason to ascertain the evidence and the sense of Revelation. In prosecuting the first branch of inquiry, we have a right to consider ourselves as instituting a rigorous scrutiny into a subject with which we were previously unacquainted. The pretensions of Revelation are of so peculiar and imposing an order, its authority is so dogmatic and oracular, and the reception it demands so unqualified and implicit, that we may well expect the antecedent proofs by which its claims are supported will endure the minutest and most rigid investigation. And such indubitably is the case. It matters not to what ordeal these proofs are subjected, nor what hardihood of intelligence may be employed in attempting to invalidate the facts on which they rest. They are surrounded by testimonies against which malice itself cannot take exception, and connected with events totally inexplicable on any other principle, than that of their truth. There is, too, an immense variety of evidence, each in itself, furnishing distinct and satisfactory conclusions, and securing, in their combination,

a force of argument, justly entitled to all the authority of moral demonstration.

In determining the sense of Revelation, however, it becomes us to adopt a method of inquiry, in some respects, different from that which is employed in ascertaining its evidence. Facts in both cases are the subjects of investigation, but in the former, the truth of the facts is necessarily dependant on human testimony : that is, human beings like ourselves, with the same passions, and senses, and feelings we possess, are the witnesses and memorialists of the facts. We are therefore compelled to ascertain their competency and credibility, by the ordinary laws of historic evidence. We examine their character ; we investigate contemporary and independent testimonies ; we attend to the events of unquestionable notoriety which resulted from their exertions ; and in connection with the facts which they attested, (supported by analogous facts equally remarkable, which took place before enemies as well as friends, and in circumstances which provoked and demanded inquiry,) we find a series of moral effects produced by the reception of their testimony, and ultimately terminating in the diffusion and establishment of a new religion. Now, in the inquiries which make us acquainted with these facts and records, we are naturally led to that mode of investigation, which is best adapted to the induction of evidence, and its just impression on our belief. But that belief once gained, we find the first witnesses instantly assuming a new character. They become the authorised interpreters of the divine will ; they sustain peculiar and exclusive prerogatives ; and are emphatically and pre-eminently, "ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech men by

them." By virtue of this sacred character, they demand the same implicit submission to their recorded testimony, which they claimed for their oral instructions, and respecting all the discoveries which their writings contain, on the various subjects of faith and duty, they assert with confidence—"God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Now in examining these subjects, we have not precisely that liberty of inquiring which we exercise in reference to the antecedent evidence. By means of that evidence we have arrived at the important conclusion, that the instructions are *divine*: and "if we receive the witness of men, *the witness of God is greater*." Here we lose sight of the instruments of communication; here we perceive the ultimate design of the powers and endowments they possessed; which were not to accomplish either personal or temporary objects, but to accredit and authorise the communication itself, and to invest it with all the characters of inspiration. By virtue of such claims, the assertions of the sacred volume become intitled to an implicit and unhesitating reception. As far as its information may include notices of facts capable of proof from other sources, or allusions to subjects within the sphere of unassisted reason, we are authorised to examine the agreement of such notices and allusions with our antecedent knowledge: but on every topic on which no previous information existed, and respecting which there could not possibly exist any previous information, our only inquiry relates to the import of the terms in which the communication is made, and the uses to be made of the communication itself. The question, as to the right interpretation, is a question of grammar and criticism; and to the decisions thus legitimately formed, whether

agreeing or not with our previous reasonings, we are bound to yield unequivocal and cordial subjection.

It is obvious, however, that in attempting to ascertain the sense of Scripture, we are not to confine our attention to any individual passage, but regard the general scope and tenor of sacred truth. In order to the elucidation of insulated texts, we must consider not only their connection, but the analogy of Scripture; and examine how far the interpretation accords with other parts of Revelation. We are also at perfect liberty to avail ourselves of the assistance to be derived from the knowledge of language in general, of foreign and ancient customs, and of peculiar modes of speech, for the purpose of arriving at the genuine sense of particular passages. In fact, the same principles, of rational interpretation, which are applied to the language of other ancient authors, should be applied to the interpretation of scriptural discoveries. If the Almighty has revealed his will to mortals, in the form of a written testimony, we are persuaded that the language of that testimony must be intelligible, and the sense of that language must be ascertained by the ordinary methods of explanation.

In applying these general remarks to the subjects before us, there is only one question which deserves our notice. "Is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church respecting *Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice of the Mass*, supported by the rational interpretation of Scripture?" To enter into the force of this question, I shall present to you, a statement of that doctrine, in reference to the former of these subjects, as it is set forth in the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent,

and as it is explained by a writer of high authority in their communion.

" Since Christ our Redeemer has truly said that
 " that was his own body, which he offered under
 " the appearance of bread ; it has therefore been
 " always believed in the Church of God, and it is
 " now again declared by this holy council—that
 " by the consecration of the bread and wine,
 " there is effected, a conversion of the whole sub-
 " stance of the bread, into the substance of the
 " body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole
 " substance of the wine, into the substance of his
 " blood : which conversion is fitly and properly
 " termed, by the holy Catholic Church, Transub-
 " stantiation."*

" If any one shall deny that in the most holy
 " sacrament of the Eucharist, there are contained,
 " truly, really, and substantially the body and
 " blood, together with the soul and divinity of
 " our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole
 " Christ ; or say that he is in it only as in a sign,
 " or figure, or by his influence, he is accursed !

" If any one shall say that in the sacrament of
 " the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and
 " wine remains together with the body and blood
 " of our Lord Jesus Christ,† and shall deny the
 " wonderful and singular conversion of the whole
 " substance of the bread into his body, and the

* *" De Transubstantiatione.* Quoniam autem Christus Redemptor noster, corpus suum id, quod sub specie panis offerebat, vere esse dixit ; ideo persuasum semper in ecclesia Dei fuit, idque tunc denuo, sancta hæc synodus declarat, per consecrationem panis et vini *conversionem fieri totius substantiæ panis in substantiam corporis Christi domini nostri, et totius substantiæ vini, in substantiam sanguinis ejus :* quæ conversio convenienter et proprie a sancta Catholica ecclesia *Transubstantiatio* est appellata. *Concil. Trid. Sess. xiii. Cap. iv.*

† This is the *Consubstantiation* of the Lutheran Church.

"whole substance of the wine into his blood, the
"appearances only of bread and wine remaining,
"which conversion the Catholic Church, most
"properly terms Transubstantiation—he is ac-
"cursed!"

"If any one shall deny, that in the adorable
"sacrament of the Eucharist, a separation being
"made, the whole Christ is contained in each
"element or species, in the separate parts of each
"element or species, he is accursed!"*

If I had not produced the high authority of a General Council, on this mysterious process of *conversion*, and given you the sentiments of the Roman Church, in the language of its own canonical declarations, you might have imagined, that I was endeavouring to amuse you with a specimen of human credulity, the most marvellous of any on record in the history of human folly. It is believed that by the act of consecration in the sacrament of the Eucharist, the element of bread and wine, are actually, really, and substantially converted into the actual, real, substantial body and blood, soul and divinity, of our adorable Redeemer—that identical body that suffered, ago-

* *Ibid.* "Canon I. Si quis negaverit in sanctissimæ Euchariſtiæ sacramento contineri vere, realiter et substancialiter corpus et sanguinem una cum anima et divinitate Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ac proinde totum Christum; sed dixerit tantummodo esse in eo ut in signo, vel figura, aut virtute; anathema sit."

"Canon II. Si quis dixerit in sacrosancto Euchariſtiæ sacra-
mento remanere substantiam panis et vini una cum corpore et san-
guine Domini nostri Jesu Christi, negaveritque mirabilem illam
et singularem conversionem totius substantiæ panis in corpus, et
totius substantiæ vini in sanguinem, manentibus dumtaxat spe-
ciebus panis et vini: quam quidem conversionem Catholica ec-
clesia aptissima Transubstantiationem appellat; anathema sit."

"Canon III. Si quis negaverit in venerabile sacramento Eu-
charistiæ, sub una quaque specie, sub singulis cujusque speciei
partibus, separatione facta, totum Christum contineri; anathema
sit." *Concil. Trid. Sess. xiii. Cap. 8.*)

nised and died on the cross—that identical body that is now glorified at the right hand of the Father! It is further believed that each of these consecrated elements, becomes also separately and individually, the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: so that the whole of Christ—“body—soul and divinity,” is contained in the bread separately, and in the wine separately; and that therefore, this bread and wine, become separately entitled to all the expressions of outward homage and adoration, whether preserved in the Church, or exhibited in processions for the edification of the multitude!

But let us examine still further, this mystery of mysteries. It is believed that the conversion takes place, though no visible or sensible change be effected in the appearances and properties of the consecrated elements. As the Eucharist is observed in thousands of places at the same time, it is believed that in each place, the body, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ are received by the communicants; that therefore the body of Christ is at the same instant of time, in a thousand different places! There is something so indescribably prodigious and absurd in all this, that it is difficult to frame a serious argument in its refutation. It so directly outrages all probability and common sense, and is so monstrously repugnant to the first principles of reasoning, and the ordinary laws of credibility, that the fact of its reception can be accounted for only on the admission, that whatever the Church of Rome declares on any subject of faith or duty is by that declaration alone, entitled to our implicit and unresisting subjection.

This process of Transubstantiation is always represented by the advocates of its authority, as *a miracle and a mystery*; and is defended on the assumed ground of its analogy to other mysteries.

of revelation. As it is proper you should know all that can be said in its defence and explanation, I shall cite the cautious language of *Gother* on this subject.

"The papist truly represented believes it abominable to commit any kind of idolatry; and most damnable to worship or adore a breaden god, or to give divine honour to the elements of bread and wine. He worships only one God, who made heaven and earth, and his only Son Jesus Christ our Redeemer! who, being in all things equal to his father, in truth and omnipotency, he believes, made his words good, pronounced at his last supper; really giving his body and blood to his Apostles; the substance of bread and wine being by his powerful words changed into his own body and blood, the species or appearance of the bread and wine remaining as before. The same he believes of the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, consecrated now by priests; that it really contains the body of Christ, which was delivered for us; and his blood, which was shed for the remission of sins; which being there united with the divinity, he confesses the whole Christ to be present. And him he adores and acknowledges his Redeemer, and not any bread or wine. And for the believing of this mystery, he does not at all think it meet for any Christian to appeal from Christ's word to his own senses or reason, for the examining the truth of what he said, but rather to submit his senses and reason to Christ's words in the obsequiousness of faith: and that being the son of Abraham, it is more becoming him to believe as Abraham did, promptly, with a faith superior to all sense or reason, and whither these could never lead him. With this faith it is he believes every mystery of his religion,

" the trinity, incarnation, &c. with this faith he
" believes that what descended upon our Saviour
" at his baptism in Jordan, was really the Holy
" Ghost, though senses or reason could dis-
" cover it to be nothing but a dove; with this
" faith he believes that the man that Joshua saw
" standing over against him with his sword drawn,
" *Josh.* v. 13. and the three men that Abraham
" entertained in the plains of Mamre, *Gen.* xviii.
" were really and substantially no men; and that
" notwithstanding all the information and evidence
" of sense, from their colour, features, proportion,
" talking, eating, &c. of their being men; yet
" without any discredit to his senses, he really
" believes they were no such thing, because God's
" word has assured him of the contrary: and with
" this faith he believes Christ's body and blood
" to be really present in the blessed sacrament,
" though, to all outward appearance, there is
" nothing more than bread and wine: thus not at
" all hearkening to his senses in a matter where
" God speaks, he unfeignedly confesses, that he
" that made the world of nothing but his sole
" word: that cured diseases by his word: that
" raised the dead by his word: that commanded
" the winds and seas: that multiplied bread: that
" changed water into wine by his word, and sin-
" ners into just men, cannot want power to change
" bread and wine into his own body and blood by
" his sole word. And this without danger of multi-
" plying his body, of making as many Christs as
" altars, or leaving the right hand of his Father.
" But only by giving to his body a supernatural
" manner of existence, by which, being without
" extension of parts rendered independent of
" place, it may be one and the same in many
" places at once, and whole in every part of the
" symbols, and not obnoxious to any corporeal

"contingencies. And this kind of existence is no
 "more, than what in a manner he bestows upon
 "every glorified body; than what his own body
 "had, when born without the least violation of
 "his mother's virginal integrity: when he arose
 "from the dead, out of the sepulchre, without
 "removing the stone: when he entered amongst
 "his disciples, the doors being shut. And though
 "he cannot understand how this is done, yet he
 "undoubtedly believes, that God is able to do
 "more than he is able to understand."*

This elaborate exposition of the doctrine in question, embraces all the arguments that are generally adduced in its defence. They may be classed under three topics, to which we shall attend separately. The *first* argument is derived from the words of our Lord, when he instituted the "Sacrament of the Eucharist." (Matt. xxvi. 26.—29. Mark xiv. 22—25. Luke xxii. 17—19. 1 Cor. xi. 23—25.) All the sacred historians inform us, that our Lord "took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "*This is my body broken for you,*" &c. "After the same manner he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, "*This cup is the New Testament in my blood,*" &c. Matthew and Mark relate that he said, "*This is my blood of the New Testament,*" &c. According to the Romanists, our Lord in these declarations, *intended* to assert that the bread and the wine were *literally* and actually his body and his blood; although St. Luke and St. Paul inform us, that he said nothing about the *wine*, but declared that the "*cup*" was the "*New Testament*." Now on this principle of *verbal* and *literal* interpretation, I have as good reason for asserting that the *cup is the New Test-*

* Gother's "Papist truly represented," § 5. p. 7, 8.

tament, &c. as they have to say, that *the bread and wine are the body and the blood!* There is something so inexpressibly absurd in the supposition, that there is no small difficulty in refuting it.* But as something must be said, lest it should be said, there is nothing to say, I remark, that this interpretation is not necessary in order to ascertain the meaning of the passage—that it is highly irrational and opposed to several explicit testimonies respecting the human nature of Jesus Christ—and that it is an interpretation highly injurious to the interests of Christianity.

This strangely literal interpretation is by no means necessary to the understanding of the passage. The structure of all languages, and the ordinary habits of speech admit of representations which are not verbally correct; but which at the same time are easily and universally understood. Figurative allusions and metaphorical terms continually occur even in the ordinary intercourse of society, and are so interwoven with our conversation; that we are often unconscious of the use of them. If we were to analyse minutely the sentences which are uttered casually and incidentally, on any subject whatever, we should find terms and phrases which, if taken literally

* “It might well seem strange,” says Archbishop Tillotson, “if any man should write a book to prove that an egg is not an elephant, and that a musket bullet is not a pike: it is every whit as hard a case, to be put to maintain, by a long discourse that what we see and handle, and taste to be bread, is bread, and not the body of a man; and what we see and taste to be wine, is wine, and not blood: and if this evidence may not pass for sufficient, without any further proof, I do not see, why any man, that hath confidence enough to do so, may not deny any thing to be, which all the world sees it is; or affirm any thing to be what all the world sees, it is not; and this without all possibility of being further confuted.” *Tillotson’s Sermons*, Vol. II. Serm. xxvi.

and according to their separate verbal sense, would be altogether unintelligible. We feel, however, no inconvenience from such habits of language: and as language is the arbitrary symbol of our ideas, we are naturally led to conform to the usual style and phraseology, and should be absurdly precise, if we acted on any other principle.

The less refined and philosophical the general intellectual state of a country, the more will its language be marked by figurative and metaphorical allusions. This will account for the boldness and variety of Eastern imagery, and for the constant use of tropes and metaphorical modes of speech in the sacred writings. We find the discourses of our Lord which, in order to be intelligible, at the time of their delivery, were conformed to the ordinary methods of illustration, abounding in figures; and not merely in figures, but in such an appropriation of them to the object, that the words literally explained, assert the identity of the one with the other. The Saviour not only compares himself to a *door*, and a *vine*, but he says—“*I am* the door,” “*I am* the vine.” But there is no inaccuracy here; it is perfectly intelligible, and no one can misunderstand the language, who is not determined to misunderstand it. It is obviously in the same mode of speech that he said—“This is my body”—“this is my blood.”—The whole institution is clearly emblematical; and the phraseology of our Lord is conformable to the style he ordinarily adopted on such subjects. According to our opponents, when he said to Peter, “*thou art a rock*,” will they say, that he meant to affirm that the Apostle, was *literally a rock*? Here they are compelled to resort to the obvious sense, the figurative

meaning of the declaration. In the same style, the apostle Paul tells us, adverting to the “rock in the wilderness”—“*that rock was Christ*”: but does any one imagine that Christ was literally a rock, or that the rock was literally Christ? Is it not evident that by such a mode of expression, it was intended to convey the idea, that the rock was merely an emblem or representation of Christ?

The typical nature of the Eucharist would be immediately understood by the Jewish Christians. Accustomed to the emblematic and prefigurative rites of their own economy, they would instantly perceive the symbolical design of the Christian pass-over. The representation of spiritual things by material emblems and ceremonial institutions, was familiar to their minds; and they would naturally recognise the principle on which the new rite was founded. It would never occur to them that the bread was actually and substantially the body of Christ, or the wine his blood; but they would regard the elements of bread and wine, as appropriate and significant representations.

“In the Hebrew, Chaldee and Chaldeo-Syriac “languages,” observes a learned critic of the present day, “there is no term which expresses to “mean, signify, denote, though both the Greek “and Latin abound with them: hence the He-“brews use a figure, and say, *it is*, for *it signi-“fies*. So Gen. xli. 26, 27. *the seven kine ARE* “(i. e. represent) *seven years*. *This is* (repres-“sents) *the bread of affliction which our Fathers* “*ate in the land of Egypt*. Dan. vii. 24. *The* “*ten horns ARE* (i. e. signify) *ten kings*. And “following this Hebrew idiom, though the work “is written in Greek, we find in Rev. i. 20. the “*seven stars ARE (represent)* the angels of the “*seven churches*; and the *seven candlesticks ARE*

"(represent) the seven churches. The same form
 "of speech is used in a variety of places in the
 "New Testament, where this sense must neces-
 "sarily be given to the word.—Matt. xiii. 38, 39.
 "The field *is* (represents) the world; the good
 "seed *are* (represent) the children of the king-
 "dom: the tares *are* (signify) the children of the
 "wicked one: the enemy *is* (signifies) the devil:
 "the harvest *is* (represents) the end of the world:
 "the reapers *are* (signify) the angels, &c.—Gal.
 "iv. 24. For these *are* the two covenants.—i. e.
 "they signify the two covenants—[for they are
 "expressly said to be *an allegory.*]—The truth
 "is, there is scarcely a more common form of
 "speech in any language, than *this is*, for this
 "represents or signifies."*

In the next place, this interpretation, is most irrational, and opposed to various passages in the sacred volume respecting the present state of Christ's human nature. At the time of our Lord's instituting this sacramental rite, he had not suffered "the just for the unjust;" his body had not been broken, his blood had not been shed. On the principle of our opponents, this absurd conclusion follows, that at the moment

* Dr. A. Clarke's "Discourse on the Eucharist"—p. 51, 52. On this subject he further remarks; 'That our Lord neither spoke in Greek nor Latin on this occasion, needs no proof.' It was most probably in what was formerly called the *Chaldaic*, now the *Syriac*, that our Lord conversed with his disciples. Through the providence of God, we have complete versions of the gospels in this language; and in them it is likely, we have the precise words spoken by our Lord on this occasion. Of the passage, Matt. xxvi. 16, 17. the Greek is a verbal translation, nor would any man, even in the present day, speaking in the same language, use among the people to whom it was vernacular, other terms to express, This *represents* my body, and this *represents* my blood." p. 53.

when he said, "this is my body," there were actually two bodies, one which held the bread, and the bread itself: and as both the bread and the wine *separately* become the body and the blood, it also follows, that when Jesus *took the cup and supped*, he actually drank his own blood and partook of his own body; so that one body ate and drank the other body; and all this "most strange and unnatural" and horribly disgusting exposition is received on the simple declaration of the Saviour—"This is my body"—and those who think and believe otherwise—are "accursed"!!!

When the disciples were "gazing up into heaven," after our blessed Redeemer had for the last time spoken to them on earth, two angels said to them, " This same Jesus who is taken "up from you into heaven, shall so come in like "manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"! It is singular he did not assure them, that they would have the privilege of eating and drinking the *very substance* of his body and his blood, the next time they met together "to break bread"! St. Peter addressing the Jews, after the miracle performed on the lame man, assured them, that "the heaven must receive or retain Jesus Christ, "until the times of the restitution of all things"! St. Paul declares that "he knew Christ after the flesh no more." On one occasion our Lord asserted the necessity of "eating the flesh of the son of man and drinking his blood"—(John vi. 53—57.) which assertions were uttered before the Eucharist was instituted and could not therefore immediately relate to that ordinance; but the figurative meaning of the declaration is most clearly stated in a subsequent passage: "IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT QUICKENETH; THE FLESH

PROFITETH NOTHING: THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK UNTO YOU (evidently referring to his previous discourse on eating his flesh, &c.) ARE SPIRIT AND THEY ARE LIFE;" i. e. they are spiritual in their meaning and reference, and respect the spirituality and life of religion in the soul. If the "flesh profiteth nothing" then the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into flesh and blood, were it really effected, could be no benefit to the participant. It would answer no end, that is not far more effectually answered, by considering the bread and wine, to be what they are, mere material representations of the Saviour's body and blood.

This notion of the real presence in the Sacrament and the actual, literal conversion of the elements is directly opposed to our Lord's account of the nature and design of the Eucharist. It was ordained by him for the purpose of *solemn commemoration*. His disciples were commanded to "do it in *remembrance* of him"—"to shew forth his death." But who ever heard of remembering one that is corporeally present? The idea of commemoration is altogether lost sight of by those who are expecting the magical incantation of priestly power to effect this marvellous conversion, while their senses and perceptions testify that neither substance nor qualities, undergo the slightest alteration.

It is almost superfluous to remark, how injurious to the interests of religion, must be the reception and propagation of such absurdities. Well may sceptics deride such a faith; and if living in countries where they have no other representation of Christianity but that contained in the principles and institutions of the Roman Church, and are naturally led to identify the one with the other, it is not surprising that they discard the

whole, as a system of spiritual chicanery and senseless superstition.*

But a second argument is adduced in favour of Transubstantiation, by representing it as a mystery, and comparing it with other parts of the Christian revelation, which are unquestionably mysterious. It is considered as analogous to the mystery of the *incarnation*—the *Trinity*, &c. This however is most fallacious reasoning. *Mystery* is a term applied to two classes of truths or facts; to the revelation of what was formerly hidden and obscured, and to those things which are in themselves incomprehensible, but the reality and existence of which are proved by sufficient authority. The testimony of the senses supports our belief in the reality of many appearances and operations in nature, which cannot be fully explained; and the testimony of revelation, previously considered to be divine, supports our belief in the truth of statements, which we may not be able, in every respect to comprehend. But

* When *Cardinal Perron* was asked by some of his friends, in his last sickness, what he thought of Transubstantiation? He answered—"that it was a MONSTER." And when they asked him, "how then, he had written so copiously and learnedly about it?" He replied—"that he had done the utmost which his wits and parts had enabled him, to colour over this abuse, and render it plausible; but that he had done like those who employ all their force to defend an ill cause" (*Drelincourt*, "Reponse a lettres de Mnoseign. Le Prince, Ernest aux cinq Ministres de Paris." *Geneve 1664.*) In the preface to *Archbishop Wake's Discourse of the Holy Eucharist*, it is related that *Archbishop Usher*, "who had converted some Roman Priests;" once enquired of them, what they who said mass every day, and were not obliged to confess venial sins, could have to trouble confessors with? They ingeniously acknowledged, that the chief part of their constant confession was *their own infidelity* as to the point of Transubstantiation; for which they mutually quitted and absolved one another!! (*Dr. Harris' Sermon at the Salters' Hall Lectures*, Vol. I. p. 232.)

*None of our P. believe & Langrath is a
superstitious devilater -*

before the term mystery can be accurately applied to Transubstantiation the fact must be proved, otherwise it is a gratuitous assumption. When the *incarnation* and the *Trinity* are termed mysterious, it is beforehand supposed that the evidence of Scripture testimony has established their reality; but in the present case this is the point to be proved, and therefore no analogy can be brought forward in its favour.

There is also an amazing difference between the assumed mystery of Transubstantiation and the mysteries referred to, in this argument. When I reflect on the nature and perfections of God, I am instantly overwhelmed by the immensity of the subject. The mysteriousness of *eternity* and *self-existence* does not arise from any opposition to reason, but from the consciousness of my own incapacity fully to understand them; and I therefore pronounce them mysterious. They are so infinitely above the distinct comprehension of the mind, that it is lost in the "boundless prospect." Thus conscious of impenetrable mystery at the very threshhold of the sacred temple, and while contemplating the first principles of religious truth, I am at once prepared to expect other and similar mysteries in the future progress of my contemplations. I am surrounded by mysteries in the phenomena of nature, and the arrangements of Providence; and it is an internal evidence of the divinity of the Bible, that it has its mysteries too. But a fact surpassing all my attempts to explain or comprehend it, and involving in it no contradiction, is widely different from an assertion, opposed at once to my senses and my perceptions. That there should be a Trinity and yet a unity in the Divine nature, is not absurd, because I am not required to believe that they are three and one in the same respect: but that bread is flesh,

and wine is blood, or that a consecrated wafer or a small portion of wine, should be separately and individually the **VERY BODY, BLOOD, SOUL AND DIVINITY** of our Lord Jesus Christ, opposes all probability and all possibility, as far as possibilities come within the cognizance of human perceptions; overturns the foundation of credit in the testimony of our senses, disarranges the entire physical constitution of our nature, and most egregiously insults the dictates and convictions of the understanding under the venerable sanctions of faith and religion.

But we are told that this truly ineffable process of conversion is not only a mystery, but a *miracle!* A miracle is a deviation from the ordinary course of things, a suspension or interruption of the laws of nature for the purpose of accrediting a divine testimony, or establishing the divine mission of an inspired teacher. All the miracles of which we read in the sacred history, and all the miracles pretended to be wrought in the Church of Rome, have been events of which the senses take cognizance, *except the miracle of Transubstantiation!* They contrive all other miracles much better than this. They do not command the people to believe that a miracle is performed, if neither their eyes nor ears, nor any other organ of sense enable them to perceive it. But in the case before us, they are called to believe against every sense they possess. Would the Jews have believed in Moses, if he had told them that they should partake of *quails* and had only presented them with the unrelished *manna*; and after performing some piece of mummery had solemnly assured them, that though their eyes and taste perceived only the manna, it was *really* and *substantially* the very flesh they needed? If Jesus Christ, after ordering the servants at the marriage feast in Cana, to fill

up the “six water-pots with water,” instead of effecting a perceptible change in the qualities of the water, and so *transubstantiating* it into wine, that they all pronounced the last wine the best, had merely presented them *water* and commanded them on pain of an *anathema*, to believe nevertheless that it was good wine, though all their senses told them a different tale—would this have been termed a *miracle*, or would it have been a “manifestation of his glory?” Would it not rather have falsified at once all his pretensions?*

“ There are two things necessary to a miracle; that there should be a supernatural effect wrought, and that this effect be evident to sense so that though a supernatural effect be wrought, yet if it be not evident to sense, it is to all the ends and purposes of a miracle, as if it were not, and can be no testimony or proof of any thing, because it stands in need of another miracle to give testimony to it, and to prove that it was wrought. And neither in Scripture, nor in

* In the extract from *Gother*, cited in p. 133—135, a reference is made to the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Saviour. What analogy to transubstantiation the writer perceived in this case, it is difficult to conceive. All that the Evangelists assert is—that the Holy Ghost “descended in a bodily shape like a dove.” Now whether the resemblance to a dove consisted in the manner of descending, or the visible appearance of a dove hovering over the head of the Saviour, no one for a moment could identify the appearance with the Holy Ghost; for this would be giving bodily shape to the Spirit, and confounding the symbol of his presence with his invisible essence. Besides, what *transubstantiation* was there in this case—and what contradiction to the senses? Had they been called upon to believe that *what seemed like a dove* was something totally different even in the visible properties it assumed, notwithstanding the testimony of their eyes, then the affair would have been analogous to this “ineffable mystery,” of transubstantiation.

The same author refers to *angelic appearances* in the shape of

" profane authors, nor in common use of speech,
" is any thing called a miracle, but what falls
" under the notice of our senses; a miracle being
" nothing else but a supernatural effect evident to
" sense, the great end and design whereof is to
" be a sensible proof and conviction to us of
" something that we do not see. For want of
" this, Transubstantiation is no miracle: a sign
" or miracle is always a thing sensible, otherwise
" it could be no sign. Now that such a *change*
" as is pretended, in Transubstantiation should
" really be wrought, and yet there should be no
" sign of it is a thing very wonderful; but not to
" sense; for our senses perceive no change. And
" that a thing should remain to all appearance just
" as it was, hath nothing at all of wonder in it.
" We wonder indeed, when we see a strange
" thing done, but no man wonders when he sees
" nothing done!"*

I am not surprised, my friends, that Roman Catholics should abandon the Scriptures on this subject, talk loudly of their insufficiency, and have recourse to the authority of the Church. Some of the advocates of Transubstantiation give up even

men to Joshua, Abraham and others: I am still at a loss to perceive the similarity to transubstantiation. The whole of the mystery in these cases, was that angels assumed the appearance of human beings and for awhile possessed the properties and exercised the functions of human beings. How this was done, it is not for us to describe, because the *facts only* are related; but there is no contradiction either to our reason or our senses in the admission of them. There is no more difficulty in conceiving that angels may appear like men, than that the Son of God himself should "become flesh and dwell amongst us." In all this there is nothing like transubstantiation—there is no conversion of the substance of one being into the substance of another being, while all the while its sensible properties remain unaltered. The other supposed illustrations of this same supernatural change are equally irrelevant, and are in no respects similar to the "miracle and mystery of Transubstantiation."

* Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. 2. p. 121.

oral tradition; and as the Church possesses all power over faith and morals, they resolve at once their admission of this inexplicable dogma, into the mere declaration of the Church. Truly, their Church should have the power of working miracles, if they can assert such absurdities as these, and pronounce those in a state of damnation, who refuse to believe them.

From the notion that the body of Christ is received, under each species, or element, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, arose the unscriptural practice of "communion in one kind;" in consequence of which the wine is confined to the priesthood, and only the consecrated wafer given to the laity. The Roman Catholics allow that this restriction was not the primitive practice; but they justify it by referring to the authority of the Church, which has a right, they say, to make what changes may be thought proper in cases of discipline, whatever may have been the undoubted usage of the apostolic Churches.* Here we see the fatal operation of the leading principle of their system; and here also we perceive the refutation by their own statement of the assumption that ancient, undisputed, universal tradition supports their ecclesiastical institutions. They are compelled to acknowledge, as is most unequivocally evident from the epistle to the Corinthians, that the first Churches partook of *both species* in the Eucharist; and yet in the face of this practice, the authority of their Church, in the fifteenth century, by the decision of the Council of Constance, (1414) determined that the "custom of communicating in one kind, should be received as a law "which no one, without the authority of the

* See Appendix. NOTE P.

"Church might reject or alter."* Thus they set aside the commandment of God, and "teach for doctrines the commandments of men"!

With the dogma of *Transubstantiation*, is connected *the Sacrifice of the Mass*: an explanation of which, I shall give you in the words of a modern advocate of their own communion. "Our "Saviour, in leaving to us his body and blood "under two distinct species or kinds, instituted "not only a *sacrament*, but a *sacrifice*; a com- "memorative sacrifice, distinctly shewing his pas- "sion and his death until he come. For as the "sacrifice of the cross was performed by a distinct "effusion of his blood, so is that sacrifice com- "memorated in this of the altar by a distinction of "the symbols. Jesus therefore is there given *not* "only to us, but for us; and the Church is thereby "enriched with a *true, proper, and propitiatory* "sacrifice, usually termed the *MASS*: propitiatory "we say, because representing in a lively manner "the passion and death of our Lord, it is pecu- "liarly pleasing to our eternal Father, and thus "more effectually applies to us, the all-sufficient "merits of the sacrifice of the cross."†

The passages of Scripture generally cited in support of the *Sacrifice of the Mass* are, the prediction of Malachi, (i. 10. 11.) that "in every place incense and a clean offering" should be presented to the Lord; the words of our Lord at the institution of the Eucharist; and the symbolical representation of the worship of heaven, in the book of the Revelation. On such insufficient grounds as these, do they vindicate their practice. If you can see any thing like a propitiatory sacri-

* *Conc. Gen.* T. xii. Sess. xiii. p. 100. † *Berrington's*
"Faith of the Catholics." Proposition V. p. 220.

fice in these passages, you must possess amazing penetration!

The Eucharist is termed a "commemorative sacrifice." There is an ambiguity in the meaning of the word *sacrifice*, which tends very much to aid the process of sophistical reasoning and erroneous representation. It is frequently applied in a figurative sense to the exercises of devotion and to the acts of Christian benevolence, (Phil. iv. 18. Heb. xiii. 15—16. Rom. xii. 1.) On this principle the observance of the Lord's Supper as well as any other divine institution, might be termed *a sacrifice*; in the *improper* or figurative sense of the expression. But *a sacrifice*, properly so called, is "the solemn infliction of death on a living creature, generally by effusion of its blood, in a way of religious worship; and the presenting of this act to the Deity, as a supplication for the pardon of sin, and a supposed means of compensation for the insult and injury thereby offered to his majesty and government."* If this definition be admitted, and I conceive it is altogether warranted by the accurate use of the term, and the uniform language of the Scripture, then on no principle of consistency with the sacred volume can the Eucharist be termed a sacrifice. It is the *commemorative* service in which Christians "shew forth the death of their Lord;" but the remembrance of a sacrifice, by the aid of significant emblems is essentially different from a sacrifice itself. It is therefore egregiously unwarrentable to call the Eucharist a *propitiatory sacrifice*, and then to explain the term *propitiatory* as if it were equivalent with the word *representing*. A propitiation is a sacrificial atonement; or an atone-

* This definition is taken from Dr. Smith's Sermon "on the Sacrifice of Christ." p. 4.

ment by sacrifice ; but if the Sacrifice of the Mass only *represents* "in a lively manner the passion and death of Christ," it is an abuse and misapplication of language to call it either *a sacrifice* in the proper sense of the word, or a *propitiatory* sacrifice. With the same inconsistency the writer describes the *all-sufficient* sacrifice of Christ as rendered "more effectual," for the purpose of pardoning sinners, by this "true, proper, propitiatory Sacrifice of the Mass." It is for him to explain, how that sacrifice can be deemed *all-sufficient*, which requires another sacrifice and a constant succession of such other sacrifices to make it, "more effectual"!

And now, my friends, without occupying your time, by any detail of the splendid and imposing ceremonies, which the ritual of the Church has connected with the Sacrifice of the Mass—without enlarging on the tendency to idolatrous homage, and the actual fact of idolatrous veneration for the consecrated elements, on the part of thousands of the Roman Communion, especially in those kingdoms where their religion is exclusively professed—without reminding you of the processions in which the *host* or sacrifice (*hostia*) is carried about from place to place, and before which, the surrounding crowds kneel in senseless adoration—without attempting to prove how directly opposed is all this pomp to the simplicity, the spirituality and the genius of the Christian system, and how repugnant to all rational views of the nature of true religion, I shall close my observations on the subject, by citing a few plain and explicit passages from the inspired writings, and leave them to make their full and natural impression on your minds.

" Such an High Priest became us, who is holy,
" harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and

" made higher than the heavens ; *who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's : FOR THIS HE DID ONCE* when he offered up himself."—"Not that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place, every year with blood of others ; (for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world;) but now *ONCE*, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment ; so Christ was *ONCE* offered to bear the sins of many.—When he said, 'Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, (which are offered by the law,) then said he, Lo I come to do thy will, O God!' He taketh away, the first, that he may establish the second.—By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ *ONCE*—every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering often times the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins ; but this man, after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God—for by ONE offering he hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified," (Heb. vii. 26, 27. ix 25—28. x. 8—14.

No testimonies can be more explicit than these, respecting the perfection and sufficiency of the Redeemer's sacrifice: and the more the scope of the Apostolic argument is investigated, the more decisive will it appear on the question before us. It is the object of the Apostle to prove the insufficiency of the legal sacrifices, from the circumstance of their frequent repetition, as well as from their merely typical character and ob-

vious inadequacy to effect a real expiation. On the fact of their constant recurrence and repetition he dwells at considerable length: and frequently glances at it, after he had completed the argument, as if for the purpose of giving it peculiar impression and prominence. There was great propriety in this—because the constancy and repetition of the legal sacrifices were the very reasons why the unbelieving Jews were desirous of retaining them and continuing their obligation. If therefore the Apostle could make it appear that this repetition and frequency, were at once the proof and the effect of their inadequacy, he gained a most important point; and exhibited in the ONE offering on the cross a striking contrast in point of efficiency to the offerings under the law. Hence it followed, that no more sacrifices were needed, and that in fact, the whole system of sacrifices was abolished. “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” But if the Apostle understood that the Eucharist was a “true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice”—not the commemoration of a sacrifice, but a sacrifice itself, the nature of his argument, the disposition of his unbelieving brethren against whom he reasoned, and all the circumstances of the case, required, that he should have pointed out the analogy in this respect, between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations. If sacrificing were to be continued under the gospel, notwithstanding what he had said about Christ’s offering himself only *once*, and if this were requisite to render his all-sufficient sacrifice “effectual,” it became the Apostle to have stated these requisitions, and to have shewn the necessity of these “commemorative” and retrospective sacrifices, after he had so completely proved the inefficacy of those which were legal and prefigurative.

On this principle, it would follow that the ministers of the gospel were in the strict sense of the term *Priests** (*ἱερεῖς*) or *sacrificers*. Now it is singular, if under the new dispensation, its ministers were to offer sacrifices, that amidst all the variety of terms applied in the Christian revelation to the sacred office, they should never be described as *priests*. It was the appropriate designation of the Jewish ministry; and it is altogether inexplicable on the principle contended for by our opponents, that Christian pastors, who are called *prophets, elders, overseers, stewards, shepherds, &c. &c.* should never be called *priests*. It is still more inexplicable, that in the minute account given us of ministerial duties under the gospel economy, in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, expressly written on this subject, and in the historical details of the apostolic Churches, there should not be one direct or incidental allusion to the office of sacrificing. It would, one should have thought, have amazingly softened the prejudices of an objecting Jew, to have told him that sacrifices had “not ceased to be offered”—and that *a hierarchy, a priesthood*, still continued. “But we never meet with this argument in favour of Christianity; we never find any reference to the practice; and the deduction is supported by all the principles of just reasoning, that the primitive Churches, under the apostolic ministry, were altogether unacquainted with “the Sacrifice of the Mass.”

The true state of the fact, my friends, is, that at an early period, the spirit of Judaism on the one hand, and a “vain and deceitful philosophy”

* The word *priest* is most probably an abbreviation of the word *presbyter*, and is therefore not the exact equivalent of *ἱερεῖς* and *sacerdos*. But whatever be its etymology, it is now equivalent, in the established use of the term, in our Translation of the Old and New Testament.

on the other, corrupted the simplicity of Christian institutions, and the purity of Christian doctrines. It was soon conceived, that the Jewish hierarchy, confessedly of divine appointment, was the model to which the Christian institute should be conformed. The gradations of ecclesiastical office, the vestments of the priesthood, and the service of the temple, became the archetypes of the Church ; and the principle once admitted, its operation would be traced in the revival of Jewish splendour, under the nominally Christian dispensation. The gospel had most distinctly announced the termination of sacrifices, in the proper sense of the term ; but if Christian ministers were *priests*, they “must have somewhat to offer”! The instructions of the New Testament afforded them no directions ; the practices of the Apostles exhibited no precedent ; no architectural model for the construction of a Christian altar, had been preserved amongst the antiquities of the primitive Church ; and they could not immolate a living animal, without a tremendous violation of the principles of the Christian economy. Still they had all that was sacerdotal and pontifical, with the apparatus of incense, ablutions, &c. &c. and nothing was wanting but a “true and proper sacrifice.” In this dilemma some ingenious priest thought of an “*unbloody* sacrifice,” though such a thing had never been heard of before. The commemorative emblem of a sacrifice was soon converted into a sacrifice itself ; and as bread and wine did not after all *look like a sacrifice*, they were conveniently transubstantiated into real flesh and blood ! The process was now ended—and the mystery complete ! All the while, the proper use of language, the right use of reason, and the true use of Scripture were *sacrificed* too ; and laid in prostrate submission before the unhallowed altar of ecclesiastical authority !

The more I reflect on the doctrine of the Roman Church on these subjects, the more I am astonished that such a notion as *Transubstantiation* should ever obtain credit in the world. It is altogether unsupported by the authority of the earliest Fathers; the word was unknown till the twelfth century;* and the notion gradually arose out of the mystical ideas which were attached to the Eucharist, and the veneration with which the symbols were regarded. The subserviency of the doctrine to the promotion and support of priestly power, proved an obvious recommendation of it; for who would, or who durst dispute on any subject, the veracity of those who actually wrought greater miracles than any of the Apostles ever performed; who turned bread and wine by a single sentence into flesh and blood, and were able to make the people believe this—their eyes and taste and touch all the while contradicting that belief! The miracle consisted in the belief of the thing, not in the thing itself; and if they could effect this prodigy on the minds of men, I wonder at nothing else. That power over the elements of thought must have been truly invincible, which could establish such a notion as this, and every other instance of submission would be the natural effect of this amazing and unaccountable acquiescence!

The “real presence in the sacrament” has been the fruitful subject of speculation and inquiry; and it must be confessed, that some Protestant Churches have employed on this subject, to say the least, very ambiguous and unscriptural language. They have symbolised in some degree with the Church of Rome, in the use of mystical

* The word *transubstantiation* was invented by Petrus Blensis. A. D. 1160. Cave ii. 233. See Appendix. NOTE Q.

and superstitious terms ; they have lost sight of the true nature of the ordinance as merely typical and commemorative of the death of Christ and the design of that death ; and they have given the advocates of Transubstantiation an advantage in point of consistency, over their half-mysterious absurdities. That Christ is present, is “most surely believed amongst us ;” but that presence is in no sense *corporeal*. He is present “wherever two or three are gathered together in his name,” by the influence and operations of his Holy Spirit : and when the material emblems of his body and blood are presented to the view of his disciples, and they enjoy the communion or joint participation of those emblems—as far as they are actually exercising the graces of faith and love in that fellowship, they are blessed with the spiritual presence of their divine Lord. They “discern his body” in the emblems, just as they discern the influence of the Spirit in the water of baptism—just as the Jews discerned the passover in the mere commemoration of it. And this is all that faith and reason require. Here there is no credulity in our faith, and no contradiction to our reason. The ordinance is marked by its simplicity, its spirituality, its appropriate exhibition of the circumstances and designs of our Lord’s sufferings : and thus “partaking of one bread,” and meeting at one table, we are reminded of the dispositions we should cultivate and display, in our intercourse with each other ; of our obligations to live as the disciples of Christ ; and of the hopes we indulge, as the expectants of that glory which will consist in eternal fellowship with our Lord and with each other, in the heavenly temple.

LECTURE V.

ON THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.*

THE term *sacrament*, though not of scriptural authority, is applied to those ordinances of our holy religion, which are of a symbolical nature; in the administration of which “outward and visible signs” are employed to represent some “inward and spiritual grace;” and which are conceived to lay those who observe them, under voluntary and special obligations to universal obedience. “A sacrament,” according to the canons of the Council of Trent, “is the symbol “of a sacred thing, and the visible form of an “invisible grace.”† In the application of the term thus defined, to the ordinances of *Baptism* and the *Eucharist* or the Lord’s Supper, there is no controversy between us: but on the general subject of the sacraments, there are two important

* I am aware that the preceding lecture, as it respects the faith of the Roman Church concerning one of the sacraments, might have been included under this general discussion: but the importance of the subject, and its prominence in the creed of that Church, obviously demanded the appropriation of an entire and separate discourse.

† *Commune hoc quidem est Eucharistiæ cum cæteris sacra-
mentis, symbolum esse rei sacræ et invisibilis gratiæ, formam
visibilem.* *Sess. xiii, c. iii.*

grounds of objection, which, were there no other reasons of secession, would justify and demand our separation from the Church of Rome. We accuse that Church of corrupting those sacramental ordinances which are confessedly of divine institution; and of adding to their number, such as are altogether unauthorised by the word of God.

I. In the first place, the Church of Rome has corrupted the sacraments of divine institution. In the administration of rites, which derive their authority and obligation from the will of Jesus Christ, the Supreme Legislator of the Church, it is of the highest importance to ascertain the meaning of his own injunctions; to bring to the interpretation of that meaning, only those principles which his truth supplies; to adhere as far as existing circumstances allow to the letter of his commands; and above all, to consider the spirit and practical design of all his appointments. We are not at liberty to alter and innovate, according to our inclinations and prejudices, when it can be clearly ascertained, what was the will and intention of our Lord. And it may be confidently asserted, that *all that is essential to the acceptable observance of any sacred rite, may be ascertained from the language of the institute itself, and the inspired record of its observance in the apostolic Churches.*

It should also be remembered that the Apostles, the inspired guides of the first Churches, have uniformly represented the Christian dispensation as distinguished from the Mosaic Economy by the simplicity of its institutions. St. Paul especially, discovers the greatest anxiety and solicitude on this subject; and employs the language of strong remonstrance and dissuasion, for the very purpose of counteracting the natural ten-

dency of the Jewish and Gentile converts to observe some parts of the abolished ceremonial of the former dispensation. "After ye have known "God, or rather are known of God, how turn "ye again to the weak and beggarly elements "whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? "Ye observe days and months and times and "years—I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." "If ye be dead "with Christ from the rudiments of the world, "why are ye subject to ordinances (touch not—"taste not—handle not which are all to perish "with the using) *after the commandments and doctrines of men?*" (Gal. iv. 9, 11. Col. ii. 20, 22.) It is not so much the particular subject of these protests, as the principle involved in them, which I conceive deserves our special attention. They are directly opposed to what was characteristic of the legal economy—its numerous and complicated ceremonies. Whatever local and temporary objects might be accomplished by such ceremonies, their obligation had expired:—another order of things had commenced—a "kingdom not of this world,"—a "pure and undefiled religion"—an intellectual and spiritual dispensation—one that was pre-eminently a "reasonable service," in all its requirements and institutions. The law was composed of shadows and symbols and types; but the gospel exhibits facts and doctrines. It contains indeed an explicit account of two ordinances of a symbolical nature; but how contrasted with the minuteness and detail of the Mosaic ceremonies are the accounts of these institutions. There is a generality—a comprehensiveness—a latitude of meaning in the one that we might expect to find in the institution of rites, designed to be of universal obligation and every where practicable. Had the language

employed to those minute specifications which distinguished the legal code, it might have suited one particular class or nation, but it might have been incapable of application to the circumstances of other nations. And where the great "author of our faith" has made no requisitions, and imposed no ceremonies, shall we bow to human authority and forsake Apostolic precedent? When Jesus Christ appointed the Eucharist, he commanded his disciples to "break bread and eat it, and to drink wine in remembrance of him," to "shew forth his death till he should come," the second time, to accomplish all the purposes of his mercy. I need not remind you of the manner in which this sacred rite has been corrupted by the pompous ceremonies and fascinating splendour of the Sacrifice of the Mass. The subject has already occupied your attention: and you have beheld the awful process of mysterious iniquity, gradually corrupting the simplicity and intention of that institution, till with senseless adoration, the Church of Rome has taught her children to bow before the corruptible elements of consecrated bread and wine, and to believe that by their incantations they have been converted into the very body and blood, soul and divinity of the incarnate Saviour.

Enough has been said in a preceding discourse to prove the corruptions of the Eucharist; and in a similar manner, though not to the same extent, they have impaired the simplicity and purity of the baptismal rite. This has been done, by adding to it, ceremonies for which there is no authority in the Christian revelation; and by unscriptural representations of its efficacy.

The institution of sponsorship, the exorcising rites before the act of baptising commences, the use of salt and oil, and saliva in the baptism

itself, and various other absurd unmeaning ceremonies, are employed in the administration of this ordinance.* It is impossible to read their own accounts, of such a service without perceiving its direct and obvious contrast to the simplicity of an apostolic administration. When Philip baptised the Eunuch, and when the Jailer of Philippi and his household were baptised, the facility with which the rite was performed, and the total absence of all the ridiculous applications which the Roman rubric requires, must instantly strike a reflecting mind, as singularly opposed to their prolonged and complicated ceremonies.

* "The following," says *Dr. Hurd*, in his *Rites and Ceremonies*, &c. "is as nearly as possible, the form used in baptism in the Church of Rome. The priest first asks the sponsors what sex the child is of—whether they are its true god-fathers and god-mothers—if they are resolved to live and die in the true Catholic faith—and what name they intend to give it? After an exhortation, he calls the child by the name given it, and asks, 'What dost thou demand of the Church? To which the god-father answers, 'faith.'—After several other inquiries, the priest breathes three times upon the child's face, saying, 'Come out of this child, thou evil spirit, and make room for the Holy Ghost.' This being done, he makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead, and afterwards on his breast, repeating at the same time, 'Receive the sign of the cross on thy forehead, and in thine heart.'—He then blesses the salt, if it was not blessed before; which being done, he takes a little of it, and puts it into the child's mouth, saying 'Receive the salt of wisdom.' After this, he puts his thumb in his mouth and having dipped it in spittle, rubs it over the mouth of the child. The next thing is to strip the child naked on the upper part of his body, while the priest prepares the holy oil. The god-fathers and god-mothers hold the child over the font, with the face towards the east. After some questions, the priest pours the water thrice on the child's head, in the form of a cross, mentioning at each time one of the persons of the Trinity. He then anoints the top of the child's head in the form of a cross, with the sacred oil, and puts over it a piece of white linen, to denote that it is cleansed from all impurities,"—*Hurd's Rites and Ceremonies*. Page 255—6.

But these things, irrational and trifling as they appear, sink into insignificance, when compared with their anti-scriptural representations of the efficacy of baptism. Indeed, on the efficacy of sacraments in general, most unwarrantable ideas prevailed at an early period in the history of Christianity, and contributed to its most grievous corruptions. The fatal tendency to attach importance to ceremonies and rites, against which St. Paul protested so strongly, displayed its uncontrolled operation, when the Church became incorporated with the state. Long before that æra, Gentile philosophy, and Jewish prejudices, had impaired the beauty and simplicity of the gospel. Innumerable observances had been gradually introduced for the purpose of adapting the religion of Christ to the degraded taste of the world; and the propensity to substitute "bodily service" for internal and practical godliness, was gratified and cherished by their multiplication. The designs of an ambitious priesthood were promoted by these means; and ecclesiastical domination was at once the cause and the effect of their operation. A mystical and inexplicable power was conceived to invest the canonical and legitimate administration of sacramental rites. The figurative language of Scripture was easily pressed into the service of supporting these exalted notions; and the simple institutions of Jesus Christ were transformed into the wonder-working mysteries of the Church. The Apostle Paul had declared that "neither circumcision availed any thing: nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love;" but the natural influence of these principles was in direct subversion of this great sentiment, and taught the people to imagine that "faith and love" were nothing, and the administration of sacraments "all in all."

Surely no principle can be more indefensible in itself, or more opposed to the general scope of the New Testament, than that which asserts the inherent efficacy of sacramental rites, and their power when legitimately administered, to produce a moral or spiritual effect on the soul. And yet this principle pervades the language of the catechisms, confessions, and prayers of the Roman Church. In the "Catholic Expositor"—baptism is called the "sacrament of regeneration—because by baptism, the man is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, and becomes an adopted son of God, according to the words, 'he gave them power to become the sons of God!'" And in answer to the question, 'What is the effect of baptism,' the Catholic Expositor replies—"All sin, original or actual, however vile, obtains remission!!" The Canons of the Council of Trent declare those *accursed*, who assert that the sacraments do not contain the grace which they represent, and even confer the grace itself on those who place no obstructions in the way of such grace. They further declare, that "if any one shall affirm that by the sacraments themselves, from the performance of the work, (*ex opere operato*) grace is not conferred, but that faith only, in the divine promise is sufficient to the obtaining of grace, he is accursed!"* In opposition to these ecclesiastical anathemas, I ask, where is the Scriptural proof of these monstrous dogmas? When was it ever asserted by Jesus Christ or by his Apostles that the mere act of baptising conferred the grace of

* Si quis dixerit, per ipsa novae legis sacramenta, ex opere operato non conferri gratiam, sed solum fidem divinæ promissiones ad gratiam consequendam, sufficere; anathema sit.—*Concil Trid. Sess vii. Can. 8.*

regeneration? In the primitive administration of this rite, it was the sign or symbol of regeneration; and its observance by adults, afforded a presumptive proof of their actual regeneration. But what in their case was the design of the ordinance? It was the evidence of their faith, and the attestation of their conversion to the Christianity. Faith was invariably presupposed as the moral requisite, which justified the application of the outward rite. To whom did Peter on the day of Pentecost administer this sacramental rite? To those who by his preaching, "were pricked to the heart," and whom he previously exhorted to repentance. On what did Philip insist, as essential to baptism, on the part of the Eunuch? "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." What compelled Peter to baptize Cornelius and his family? The visible proof of their having received the Holy Ghost: "Can any man forbid water, that these 'be not baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?'"

Not a single instance can be adduced to afford rational support to the notion of baptism conferring regeneration, from the records of the New Testament.* The one is represented as the sign

* John iii. 5. "Except a man be born of water and the spirit," &c. is a text brought forward by the advocates of baptismal regeneration to support their view of the subject. In reference to this, I would remark—*first*, that at the time when our Lord made this declaration, *Christian baptism was not instituted*. It could therefore refer only to that baptism which John administered; to which our Lord and his disciples submitted; which was the "baptism of repentance," and had an exclusive reference to the approaching reign of the Messiah. Those who were thus baptised were baptised in the faith, or on the profession of believing that the "kingdom of heaven was at hand." To this alone could our Lord refer when he stated the necessity of *water-baptism* at that period. All who are "baptised unto Christ, are baptised into his death;" but at this time, his death had not taken

of the other ; and it was not unnatural to expect that according to an established law of language, the sign and the thing signified would be so blended and associated, as to render in many instances the terms synonymous, if not identical. On this principle we can easily account for the sanction which these erroneous ideas of the sacramental efficacy of baptism derived from the rhe-

place, and therefore *Christian* baptism could not have been administered. *Secondly*, whatever our Lord meant by *water*, he states it, as quite distinct from the *spirit*: and afterwards repeats the sentiment in reference to the *spirit* without mentioning water at all. If, “ to be born of water,” signified to be baptised, to be “ bora of the spirit,” signified to be regenerated, without which the baptism of water could be of no avail. The one was the sign of the other—the visible symbol of its purifying efficacy ; but it is never represented either as the means of conveying it, or the cause of its communication. The Apostle Peter, after adverting to the saving of Noah in the ark, says—“ The like figure whereunto, even “ baptism doth also now save us”—but as if he had intended to prevent the possibility of misconstruction, he observes, “ not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.” (*1 Peter iii. 21.*) Now this “ answer of a good conscience towards God,” was not the effect and consequence of baptism, but the moral prerequisite in order to its administration. It was on the presumptive proof of this “ good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” that the figurative emblem of purity was applied, and the individual thus purified was introduced to the privileges of the Christian Church. I am aware that many Protestant writers, and especially the Semi-popish divines of the established Church, have symbolised with the Roman Church on this subject. It remains for them to explain the principles of their secession from the communion of that Church which has taught them the mysteries of the *opus operatum*. I would however remind such of the forcible and expressive declaration of their own HOOKER. “ The sacraments contain in themselves, “ no vital efficacy ; they are not physical but moral instruments “ of salvation, duties of service and worship ; which unless we “ perform as the Author of grace requireth, they are unprofit-“ able. They are moral instruments, the use whereof is in our “ hands, the effect in his ; for the use, we have his express “ commandment ; for the effect, his conditional promise.”—*Hooker's Eccl. Polity.* Book V.

torical, and inflated descriptions of the ancient fathers. It was originally the sign of a visible and actual change in the character; a criterion of the faith and obedience of a Jewish or Heathen convert. As this was the first step to be taken on the profession of Christianity, it was that expression of subjection to the authority of its divine Founder, and of faith in his resurrection, on which the Apostles would naturally insist as a sign of conversion. “In times of persecution, when so many would be tempted from the fear of man, to ‘come to Jesus by night,’ and to avoid the danger attendant on an open profession of the Christian religion, the words of our Lord might almost seem to admit of application in the sense in which they have been so generally misunderstood, and it might have been declared—‘Except ye be regenerated by the water of baptism, unless ye thus publicly put on the new man, ye cannot see the kingdom of God.’” It is very probable, that the extravagant notions entertained of the saving efficacy of martyrdom had a similar origin. The combination of an heroical zeal, with very imperfect attainments in religious knowledge, was not then unfrequent in the character of the young convert; and thus it was that martyrdom came to be welcomed and desired as possessing something of an expiatory, or at least of a meritorious efficacy. To all the external rites of religion, so long as religion itself was in the sight of the world, ignominious, a more than natural—we had almost said, a romantic importance would be attached in the Christian Church, and their original import or design, it is probable, would be gradually lost sight of. In proportion as this was the case, they would become susceptible of an indefinite meaning, and would act with all the force of indefiniteness on the imagination. The

initiatory rite of baptism must have been regarded in a light essentially different from the views of the divine Legislator, when persons could be induced to defer it till the close of life, under the idea, that it would be effectual for the remission of all their previous sins. This was indeed to make it the *laver*, not of *regeneration* only, but of *expiation* also. But even by those who had more rational views of its nature, it very soon began to be regarded in a light similar to that in which the abrogated ceremonies of the law were for a long time contended for, by the Jewish converts. The Christian would too naturally be induced to rest his confidence on a meritorious compliance with the positive law, and to glory in his baptism, as the Jew formerly made circumcision his boast and security **

On these principles, it is easy to account for the early prevalence of erroneous conceptions, respecting the efficacy of sacramental rites. There has been, in all ages, a powerful tendency in the human mind to regard external services, as if they constituted the whole of religion, and to make their observance a substitute for spiritual feeling and practical piety. Hence, the more complex, cumbersome, and splendid the ceremonies attending these observances, the more they are adapted to promote this fatal self-deception. By appealing chiefly to the senses and the imagination, and disregarding the higher faculties of our nature, there is no rational conviction, no intellectual discernment, and, consequently, no truly spiritual religion. There may be individual exceptions, but this we may confidently affirm to be the general character of those, whose religion,

* Article on Baptismal Regeneration, — *Eclectic Review*. Vol. V. N. S. p. 445.

on their own principles, is made to consist in external rites ; and concerning which rites, they are taught to believe, as one of the fundamental articles of their faith, that their legitimate administration actually bestows the grace which they are employed to represent. We know, that in our own communion, merely nominal professors are in constant danger of making outward observances the support of their hopes, and an equivalent for practical and experimental godliness ; but this tendency is cherished by no principle of our system ; and in the faithful expositions of divine truth, it is the frequent subject of admonition and reprobation. On the other hand, the devout member of the Roman Church is taught to believe, and does actually believe, in the *inherent efficacy* of sacraments to procure for him “ the full remission of all his sins.” And does not the *general* state of the Church, especially in those countries, where its influence is unimpaired, and its hold on the public mind is complete and absolute, exhibit the awful prevalence of superstition and bigotry ? Is not every article of faith resolved into arbitrary authority, and the entire routine of their religion, artificial, mechanical, and inexplicable ? Is not the whole attention absorbed by externals, and religion made ■ mere matter of ritual ? And does not this state of feeling on the subject, naturally and necessarily arise from the doctrine of sacramental efficacy, and a notion that the canonical observance of ecclesiastical institutions, is invariably efficient for all the ends of religion ? The consequence of this state of things is, that you know a Roman Catholic’s religion, not by his knowledge, his temper, his habitual tone of feeling in reference to spiritual things ; but merely by the periodical observance of ceremonies, which, once performed, he never thinks

about, till the next time of their celebration. Whatever be the explanations of their divines, and the modified effect of their principles on persons of superior intelligence, the *general* result on popular feeling, is invariably pernicious; and it may be affirmed of the great mass of their devotees, that “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, they “*go about* to establish their own righteousness, “not submitting themselves to the righteousness “of God.”

II. But I proceed to remark, in the next place, that the Church of Rome has not only corrupted the sacraments of divine institution, but added to their number such as are altogether unsupported by scriptural authority. “If any one shall say,” is the anathematising canon of their last general council, “that the sacraments of the new law were “not all of them instituted “by our Lord Jesus Christ; or that they are “more or fewer than seven, namely, Baptism, “Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme “Unction, Orders and Matrimony; or that any “of these seven is not truly and properly, a “sacrament—he is accursed!** A sacrament is defined by the authors of the “Faith of Catholics,” to be—“a sacred ceremony, instituted by our “Saviour Jesus Christ, whereby the merits of “his passion are applied to the soul of the worthy “receiver.” (Sect. II. p. 181.)

Without noticing the vaguenesses of this definition, which, on their own principles, will apply to any part of the services of their Church, as well as to the sacraments, I would inquire, in what part of the New Testament they find it asserted by Jesus Christ, that there are just seven sacraments, no more and no less—and that these

* *Concil Trid. Sess. vii. Can. I.*

seven sacraments are what they have pronounced to be so. A sacrament is a symbolic ordinance, in which an outward and visible sign represents an inward and spiritual grace. What is the outward and visible sign in *Penance*, and in *Matrimony*? What visible symbol of invisible grace do we behold in these services? But let us examine their separate claims to be considered "the sacraments of our Lord Jesus Christ."

CONFIRMATION in the Church of Rome is a sacrament administered by the bishops to those who have been baptised. It consists in anointing with the oil of balsam and olives, the forehead of the confirmed, in the form of a cross, accompanied by prayer and imposition of hands. It has been frequently called the sacrament of *chrism* or *anointing*: and it must be confessed, that in the end of the second century and the beginning of the third, from the testimonies of some of the fathers of that period, this ceremony of anointing followed the administration of baptism. It was not however termed a *sacrament*, nor considered in that light by the ancient Church. It was the unauthorised appendage to another rite, for which superstitious views of its efficacy had prepared the minds of the professed disciples of Christ. But not a single trace of the practice can be found in the Christian Revelation. The passages generally cited are Acts viii. 14—17. xix. 5, 6. 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. As these are the principal texts adduced to support their views on this subject, we shall consider how far they are applicable to their own account of the sacrament of confirmation. The first informs us, than "when "the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard "that Samaria had received the word of God, "they sent unto them Peter and John: who, "when they were come down, prayed for them,

" that they might receive the Holy Ghost : (for as " yet he was fallen upon none of them : only they " were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.) " Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they " received the Holy Ghost." " When they heard " this, they were baptised in the name of the " Lord Jesus.) And when Paul had laid *his* " hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on " them ; and they spake with tongues, and " prophesied."

Is there any reference in these citations to the sacramental *chrism* of the Church of Rome ? The Apostles possessed the exclusive power of communicating miraculous gifts ; and the ordinary method of such communication was to lay their hands on the heads of the baptised, (an ancient sign of benediction,) and accompany the act with prayer. This is not called confirmation, though I have no objection to its being so denominated ; because it was designed for the special purpose of confirming the faith of the disciples, and attesting the divinity of the Christian religion. But it is nowhere represented as a *sacramental* rite ; and its invariable connection with miraculous powers most clearly defines the extent of its obligation. Miraculous gifts have ceased, and therefore the sign of their communication should cease also. Why retain the symbol, when the design of it can no longer be accomplished ?

The remaining passage is still more inappropriate. What our translation has rendered in 2 Cor. i. 21. *establisheth*, the Roman Catholic version renders *confirmeth* ('ο δε βεβαιων). It so happens, that in this text, it is added, " and he who hath *anointed* us is God." Here it must be confessed that we have the words *confirm* and *anoint* ; but alas ! the connection will not serve their purpose. If the Apostle had represented himself,

or any of his fellow-apostles, as having thus confirmed and anointed the Corinthians, there might have seemed some plausible ground for the interpretation: but in the present instance, it is most distinctly asserted, "He who confirmeth us *with you in Christ* and hath anointed us, is God." The Apostle is not referring to the Corinthians, but to himself and his fellow-labourers mentioned in the preceding verse, who had preached the gospel among them. And he assures them, that they were established, anointed, and sealed not by man, but by God himself, whose Holy Spirit had rendered their labours successful, and sanctioned them by his miraculous and gracious communications. It is obvious, that the term *anointed*, like the term *sealed*, immediately following it, is altogether figurative: for if *anointing* be understood literally, why should not *sealing* too; and why have we not the sacrament of sealing as well as of chrism? In both these terms the allusions are sufficiently intelligible, without making them into sacramental mysteries. As priests and prophets and kings were consecrated to their respective offices by the ceremony of anointing—to *anoint* and to *set apart to an office* became synonymous expressions; and as *seals* were used for the purpose of appropriating or marking out property, and also of confirming and attesting transactions, in both these senses, the Holy Spirit might be said to seal the testimony of the Apostles, and to designate the Apostles themselves as in a special sense his inspired and commissioned servants. On the same intelligible principle might all the other passages be explained, which have in them the terms *anoint* and *confirm*; and which refer, not to any manual and ceremonial operations, but to the gifts and influences of the Sacred Spirit.

PENANCE is another sacrament of the Roman

Church, added to the number by their own self-constituted authority ; to which they attach great efficacy ; and about which, there is as much mysticism and dogmatising, as on any of the characteristic principles of their system. The word by which this all-absolving rite is known in their canons and liturgy is *pœnitentia*. I mention this, because of the sophistical use they make of the Latin term. The word *pœnitentia* is precisely the same as our word *repentance* or *penitence*; and you perceive that the one is evidently taken from the other. It is applied in Scripture and in common life, to a change of mind, and of conduct, arising from it. It includes and requires both ; and as in all cases, sorrow is the natural result of such a mental change in reference to our past conduct, the word is generally applied to the feelings of contrition, arising out of these convictions. Repentance is essentially necessary to salvation ; and the sacred writings abound in exhortations and appeals on the subject. Now this word *pœnitentia* is invariably rendered in the Roman Catholic version of the New Testament—*penance*. The mind of the illiterate and unreflecting reader is instantly led to think of the sacrament of penance ; and his previous conceptions naturally confine his attention to the ceremonial observance. He is taught by the general definition of a sacrament, that *it confers the grace it represents*, and that the mere act of performing it, is efficacious for this purpose. It will necessarily follow, from such views most sedulously instilled into his mind, that under these impressions he will resort to the priest—go through the appointed circuit of observances—submit to the requisite privations—and feel assured that he has repented, because he has received the sacramental absolution from his confessor !

But why is this penance called a *sacrament*? A sacrament according to their own writers must have *matter* and *form*. There must be a *symbol* or *sign* composed of something material, in order to complete their own definition of a sacrament. What is the *symbol* or *sign*, in the sacrament of penance, I know not; nor have any of their own writers explained it, consistently with their general account of sacraments.* The authors of the "Faith of Catholics," have given the following proposition respecting the sacrament of penance. "Catholics believe, that when a sinner repents of his sins from his heart, and acknowledges his transgressions to God and his ministers, the dispensers of the mysteries of Christ, resolving to turn from his evil ways and to bring forth fruit worthy of penance—there is then, and not otherwise, an authority left by Christ to absolve such a penitential sinner from his sins; which authority, we believe, Christ gave to his Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests of his Church, in those words, when he said, "receive ye the Holy Ghost." &c. John xx. 22. (Prop. vii. p. 282.) Now, admitting all that is contained in this proposition, I inquire with what propriety it can be termed a *sacrament*? Here is no "outward and visible sign," no symbolical representation of spiritual blessings; and therefore whatever be the institution of penance, it is not a sacrament. But there are other grounds of objection against the proposition before us.

i. In the first place, penance requires and imposes *auricular confession to a priest*. This they

* Some endeavour to get over this difficulty, by calling *contrition*, &c. the *quasi materia*, the *matter after a sort*, or *as it were!* But this is most pitiful trifling, though the fathers of the Council of Trent are guilty of it.

endeavour to support by the exhortation of St. James to "confess our faults to one another;" (Jas. v. 16.) and the declaration of St. John, that "if we confess our sins, God is faithful," &c. (1 John i. 9.) It requires no investigation, to prove that neither of these passages refers to the ministerial office at all; that the former represents it as the duty of the faithful to each other; and the latter, as the duty of the penitent towards *God!* The occasional and prudential disclosure of our moral and spiritual state, may be in some circumstances expedient, when the object aimed at is direction or consolation. In all cases of offence, the law of Christ commands the offender to go, NOT TO THE PRIEST, but to the offended party, and to be reconciled by private explanation. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and rememberest, that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar—first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.) On the same principle, he enjoins the offended to go to the offender alone, and attempt a reconciliation. (Matt. xviii. 15.) But where does the Saviour command his disciples to make a systematic and regular confession of all their sins to one another: or in what part of the inspired canon, do we find it mentioned as the exclusive prerogative of the Christian ministry, that to them alone the secret and confidential disclosure must be made? In what epistle, treating of the duties of the people to their pastors, do we find an injunction concerning confession, or a single allusion to the observance of it? Not the shadow of a fact can be adduced on the subject.

But in the absence of all Scriptural support, it may be thought that some rational arguments may be suggested in its vindication. On this view

of the subject, I remark, that the practice of confession, as it obtains in the Church of Rome, has in innumerable cases been the source of immense evil to the individuals making such confession, by the re-action of the details of sinful indulgence on their imagination and passions; to the confessor himself, by the facts and circumstances which are disclosed; and to the general habits of thinking on the subject, by which, the official exercise of priestly functions in this way, has had the effect of tranquillising the conscience on most unscriptural principles; and the minds of men have been set at rest, not because of the right application of Christian truth, but by the external administration of the rites and observances which the pretended sacrament of penance imposes. It is much easier to confess and to make compensation, by occasional bodily privations, than actually to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." It is much easier to alter the mode of living, to exchange one kind of animal food for another, to pursue for a time a course of abstinence, or even to inflict positive sufferings on the body, than it is to mortify an ambitious and sensual temper, to suppress the feelings of malevolence and resentment, or to abandon the habits of irregular and vicious indulgence. I might observe, further, that the political influence obtained by the knowledge of confessors in high and exalted stations, has often been employed for the most iniquitous purposes, and has rendered the possession of this power, a prerogative of dangerous operation to the civil interests of society. The history of Jesuitism has furnished abundant illustrations of the truth of this remark.* I remark, in the next place,

ii. That penance, as administered in the Church

* See Appendix, NOTE R.

of Rome, directly leads to false and dangerous views respecting the method of obtaining the pardon of sin. Penance, according to the general accounts given of it by the catechists and advocates of their Church, is made to consist of three things — *contrition*, *confession*, and *satisfaction*. By *satisfaction*, they mean a kind of compensation made to God, by prayers, fasting, and alms, for offences committed against him. This, they particularly explain in reference to the remission of sins, incurring temporal penalties, by which extraordinary duties are made to *satisfy* or *atone* for the commission of past sins. With this is intimately connected their notion of *indulgences*, which however explained and modified by the artful reasonings of their advocates, have been notoriously and unquestionably the cause of most pernicious opinions and practices amongst the ignorant and vulgar. “Penitent sinners,” says Gother, “being redeemed by Christ, and made “his members, may in some measure satisfy by “prayers, fasting, alms, &c. for the temporal “pain, which by order of God’s justice, some-“times remains due after the guilt and the eter-“nal pains are remitted. So that trusting in “Christ as his Redeemer, he yet does not think “that by Christ’s sufferings every Christian is “discharged of his particular sufferings; but that “every one is to suffer something for himself, as “St. Paul did, who by many *tribulations*, and “by *suffering* in his own flesh, filled up that “which was behind of the passion of Christ; and “this not only for himself, but for the whole “Church, (Coloss: i. 24.) and this he finds every “where in Scripture, viz. people admonished of “the greatness of their sins, doing penance in “fasting, *sackcloth* and *ashes*, and by voluntary “austerities, endeavouring to satisfy the divine

" justice. And these personal satisfactions God
 " has sufficiently also minded him of, in the pu-
 " nishments inflicted on Moses, Aaron, David,
 " and infinite others ; and even in the afflictions
 " sent by God upon our own age, *in plagues,*
 " *wars, fires, persecutions, rebellions,* and *such*
 " *like :* Which, few are so atheistical, but they
 " confess to be sent from heaven for the just
 " chastisement of our sins ; and which we are to
 " undergo, notwithstanding the infinite satisfac-
 " tion made by Christ, and without any under-
 " valuing it. Now being thus convinced of some
 " temporal punishments being due to his sins, he
 " accepts of all tribulations, whether in body,
 " name, or estate, from whencesoever they come,
 " and with others of his own chusing, offers them
 " up to God, for the discharging this debt ; still
 " confessing, that his offences deserve yet more.
 " But these penitential works, he is taught, to be
 " no otherwise satisfactory, than as joined and
 " applied to the satisfaction which Jesus made
 " upon the cross ; in virtue of which alone, all
 " our good works find a grateful acceptance in
 " God's sight."*

The same author on the subject of *indulgences* informs us, that by these "nothing more is meant
 " than a releasing, to such as are truly penitent,
 " the debt of temporal punishment, which re-
 " mained due on account of those sins, which,
 " as to the guilt and eternal punishment, had
 " been already remitted by repentance and con-
 " fession. For we see in the case of king David,
 "(2 Sam. xii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.) that the debt
 " of the temporal punishment is not always re-
 " mitted, when the guilt of the sin is remitted ;
 " and as the Church of God from the beginning

* Gother's "Papist," &c. p. 12, 13.

" was ever convinced of this truth, therefore,
" besides the hearty repentance and confession,
" which she insisted upon in order for the dis-
" charge of the guilt of sin; she also required se-
" vere penance, sometimes of three, seven, ten
" years, or more, for the discharge of the debt
" of the temporal punishment due to divine jus-
" tice. Now the releasing or moderating, for
" just causes, these penalties incurred by sin, is
" called an indulgence. And the power of grant-
" ing such indulgences is visibly implied in the
" promise of the keys, and of binding and loosing
" made to the pastors of the Church. (Matt. xvi.
" 19.) And the exercise of this power was fre-
" quent in the primitive Church; and is even au-
" thorised by the example of St. Paul himself,
" who granted such an indulgence to the incestu-
" ous Corinthians, (2 Cor. ii. 10.) *forgiving*, as
" he says, *in the person of Christ*; that is, by the
" power and authority he had received from him.
" Now the good works usually required for the
" obtaining indulgences, are prayer, fasting, vi-
" siting Churches, confession, communion, and
" alms-deeds,"*&c.

These extracts not only shew in what light they consider the inflictions of penance to be *a satisfaction* for the sins they have committed, and on what irrational and unscriptural grounds they establish a kind of commutation in spiritual concerns, but they strikingly illustrate the principles on which they interpret and apply the word of God to serve the purposes of their system. You perceive, in their own explanations, an unequivocal assertion of the *merit* of penal suffering, by which the voluntary austerities a man chuses to inflict upon himself, together with the tribulations of divine providence, are represented as " offered

" up to God for the discharging the debt of temporal punishment due to his sins!" Such, however, is the power of the Church, as to these affairs of temporal punishment, that a few extra-religious duties, in a case of emergency, will procure its remission; so that "the debt due to divine justice may be discharged" by means of an indulgence; if persons are rich enough to pay for it, or devout enough to deserve it! As to the passages from the apostolic writings, introduced for the purpose of supporting these ideas of *satisfaction* and *indulgence*, their application is so irrelevant, so far-fetched, and so completely unwarranted by their scope and connection, that an intelligent reader of the sacred volume, will instantly perceive their glaring inadequacy, as proofs of the Roman Catholic doctrine. The text in Col. i. 24, no one, unbiassed by system, would imagine to have any reference to the principle of satisfaction. By *the afflictions of Christ*, the Apostle does not mean, those which Christ *endured*, but those which Christ appointed him to suffer, and which were actually suffered for the cause of Christ. There is a similar phrase in Heb. xi. 26, "the reproach of Christ," which cannot mean the reproach suffered by Christ, but what was suffered *in his cause*. "Filling up that which was behind of the affliction of Christ," evidently meant—enduring the remainder of that affliction, which it was the will of God to appoint to him, in the service of Christ and for the good of the Church—not to procure absolution, but to evince his personal sincerity, and his strong attachment to the cause of the Redeemer, notwithstanding all his sufferings. I would further remark, that the passage in Colossians, is not correctly rendered "*the passion of Christ*:" it should be translated as in our own version—*the afflictions of Christ*. ($\tauων \thetaλυψεων της Χριστου$) The reference to

the forgiving of the incestuous Corinthian, (2 Cor. ii, 10.) affords not even the shadow of support in favour of indulgences. We read of no temporal punishment inflicted upon him. He had been separated from the Church, and was restored, on the satisfactory proof of penitence; but what has this to do with *indulgences*? The passage in Matt. xvi. 19. respecting "binding and loosing," has already been considered,* and has been shewn to refer exclusively, to the authoritative pronouncing of what was abolished, and what was obligatory under the Christian dispensation. It has no relation whatever to the remission or the punishment of sins. I cannot help expressing my surprise, that the advocates of the Roman Church should ever make such inappropriate citations, when a reference to the supreme and infallible authority of their Church, is deemed by them quite sufficient to establish any principle or practice which they may chuse to adopt. It would be far more consistent to abandon a volume, which after all their distortions and misconstructions, so inadequately serves their purpose, and compels them to violate every principle of accurate interpretation, in order to procure the semblance of an application to their object.

You will perceive, my friends, how awfully and perniciously opposed to every principle of our holy religion, is the notion of *satisfaction*, being obtained to any extent whatever, and through any other medium than that which the Scriptures describe as exclusive and all-sufficient. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "By one offering, he hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified." "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." What language can be

* Lect. III. pp. 97—102.

more explicit and decisive than this? The irrational and antisciptural ideas of *affliction satisfying for our offences*, and *prayers procuring the remission of these penal afflictions*, are at once derogatory to the efficacy of the great Christian sacrifice, and opposed to every just principle of moral obligation. If prayer, fasting, &c. are duties, they are no more than we ought to do; and therefore the supposition of their being meritorious, and so far meritorious, as to procure our absolution from temporal penalties, involves in it a principle of most pernicious tendency. The history of the Church of Rome, furnishes abundant proof of its actual operation. Whatever glosses and explanations are given on the subject, it is an unquestionable fact, that thousands in the communion of their Church, believe in the power of the priest to absolve them from sin, and consider indulgences as a kind of allowance to live as they please for a certain given period of time, on the vain imagination, that satisfaction, in some way or other, either by their own extra-merit or the merit of others, has been obtained by their Church.* They act on the principle of *commutation*; they keep a kind of "debtor and creditor account" with the Almighty, through the agency of their priests, who are conceived to be invested with a special commission to transact these affairs of profit and loss. If they sin, they have only to confess, and submit to some infliction of penal suffering, either in the way of corporeal chastisement, or pecuniary compensation; and when these sufferings press rather too hard upon them, they have only to procure *indulgence*, either by their devotion or their money; and the business is so adjusted, as to enable them to go on again,

* See Appendix. NOTE S.

till the next time of settling their accounts! "O
"my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto
"their assembly, mine honour be not thou united!"

iii. I observe, in the third place, that penance is founded on unscriptural views of ministerial power, and directly leads to priestly domination. The only passage cited in support of their principle of authority, is John xx. 22. "And Jesus "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Re-
"ceive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins, ye
"remit, they are remitted unto them; and
"whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." There are three senses, in which this apostolic prerogative has been understood. It may be considered in reference to their *authoritative declaration of the characters* of those whose sins would be forgiven; or the supernatural discernment by which they should be able to pronounce a decisive sentence, respecting the condemnation or pardon of *individuals*; or their power of remitting and inflicting *temporal punishments*, in circumstances of flagrant disobedience in the Christian Church. But without entering into any minute investigation of these various opinions, I observe, that whatever be the genuine sense of the text, there is no scriptural proof of its application to any but the Apostles. It was clearly, an extraordinary commission confined to them, and terminating in their ministry. This is evident from the solemn communication of the Holy Ghost, or of the miraculous powers of the Spirit with which they were invested. It was by virtue of these qualifications, they were authorised to remit and retain sins—to bind and to loose—to declare as the living oracles of God, his mind and will on every subject relating to faith and obedience. Before the language of the Saviour on this occasion, can be addressed to any order

of ministers in the Church, it should in the first place, be ascertained, whether they can possibly "receive the Holy Ghost." To pretend to confer an authority, when the radical qualification for possessing its powers and exercising its functions, is not attainable, is converting the solemnities of religion into a farce. It is the mere acting of a character, without the investiture of its real dignity; and can excite only the feelings of pity and commiseration, in a reflecting mind. For what sight on earth can be more absurdly ridiculous, than to behold a fellow mortal, without one prerogative from heaven, and no more capable of working a miracle than any unofficial man around him—not even pretending to inspiration, and professedly disclaiming its powers—what can be more absurd than to hear him say to another fellow mortal—"Receive thou the Holy Ghost," &c.; when all the while he never received the gift of miraculous power, and therefore could not possibly impart it to others? It is worse than trifling, to say, that the ordinary influences of the Spirit are exerted in every age of the Church. This I admit, and most devoutly rejoice in the fact. But this influence is not communicated by imposition of hands; nor did our Lord refer to this, when he breathed on his disciples. There is not one fact, nor one declaration in the New Testament, which conveys even by implication the idea, that the ordinary ministry of the Christian Church possessed the power of "remitting and retaining sin," in any of the senses which may be attached to the language of our Lord's communication. The authority which they pretend to support from this solitary passage, so evidently exclusive in its application, and so manifestly explained in the subsequent history of the Apostles themselves, is altogether founded

on gratuitous assumptions, and is just as defensible as their *infallibility*.

It is, however, of wondrous use in their system ; and the adoption of language in relation to priestly power, which was primarily and exclusively applicable to the apostolic ministry, is obviously of the greatest importance in maintaining and extending the domination of their clergy. It makes every priest virtually apostolic in his influence and his claims. It invests him with the authority of an oracle. It lays prostrate at his feet the reason and consciences of his flock. His touch is healing—his voice can silence the accusations of guilt, or inflict the pangs of remorse. A mysterious efficacy attends his official discharge of sacramental rites. In baptism he regenerates ; in confirmation, he assures them of the grace of God ; in the eucharist he works a miracle ; in penance, he remits and retains their sins ; and in extreme unction, he gives them a passport for heaven ! It is easy to perceive how every part of the system originates in those high notions of priestly authority, which its complicated and numerous ceremonies tend so powerfully to confirm.

EXTREME UNCTION is a third sacrament instituted by the authority of the Church, but unsupported by the authority of Jesus Christ. “The sacrament,” say the authors of *the Faith of Catholics*, “which is administered to dying persons, “to strengthen them in their passage out of this “life into a better, from the oil that is used on “the occasion, Catholics call, *Extreme Unction*, “and they believe it to be divinely instituted.” (Prop. xiii. p. 372.) The only passage adduced by the advocates of this rite, is in the epistle of James v. 14, 15. “Is any sick among you? “Let him call for the elders of the Church; and “let them pray over him, anointing him with oil

"in the name of the Lord ; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." How far this citation answers their purpose, will appear from the following considerations.

"Anointing with oil," was an ordinary medicinal application to the sick, at the time of this injunction ; and the practice of anointing on various occasions obtained amongst the Jews. The custom, which was in itself indifferent, was observed by the primitive Christians, in cases of sickness. "Oil," says an ancient Father, "relieves lassitude, and is the source of light and gladness. If such was conceived to be its physical virtue, we cannot be surprised at the observance of the practice. It seems, however, that the Jews frequently blended with the medical custom, a variety of charms and incantations, of supposed magical efficacy in cases of disease. In opposition to all these prohibited observances, the Apostle exhorts the sick to send for the "elders of the Church," who, while they retained the lawful and beneficial use of oil, were to connect with it, the exercises of faith and prayer. It was the consecration of a local usage obtaining at that period, to the purposes of charity and religion. On the same principle, we can account for the occasional practice of anointing, in the performance of miraculous cures. St. Mark, informs us, that the disciples who were commissioned to announce the approaching reign of the Messiah, during the ministry of our Lord—"cast out devils, and *anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.*" (Mark vi. 13.)

I observe, in the next place, that the passage in James, evidently refers to the exercise of *miraculous powers.* The elders of the Church were

to "pray over the sick," &c. and it is added— "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." How vastly different is this, from the sacramental unction of the Roman Church? In the one case, the rite was performed with the express view and intention of healing the sick; but in the other, it is administered only in the certain prospect of death; and so far are they from intending the recovery of the person to whom it is administered, that the probability of such an event would prevent it. In the one case, the unctuous application was merely for the purposes of bodily healing; in the other, it is employed with a view to its sacramental efficacy on the soul! In the one instance, visible effects of a miraculous nature were connected with its administration; in the other, no effects whatever result from it, or are expected to take place. On the contrary, its observance is totally unauthorised by Scripture, and in itself amazingly irrational; serving only to cherish the most superstitious ideas and expectations. The dying creature is taught to believe that it will "strengthen "his soul, in its passage, out of this life into a "better!" He receives it as a *viaticum* to help him on his journey! He relies on the performance of an unmeaning ceremony, and vainly imagines the anointing of his *body* will secure, or at least assist in securing, the safety of his *soul!* Is there not reason to conclude that *extreme* unction, is *extreme* superstition, the *last* act of fanaticism and credulity?

The sacrament of HOLY ORDER, is another addition to the number appointed by our Saviour. That the Christian ministry is of divine institution, is unquestionable; but that it is a sacramental institution, conferring grace by the mere performance of the rites administered to a person on his

admission to the office, is like the rest of their sacramental innovations, altogether unwarranted by scriptural authority. A sacrament requires a symbol; but where is the symbolical representation of inward and invisible grace in this ordinance? The "imposition of hands," is not an element, but an action. It is not peculiar to this rite; it is used in confirmation, as well as in orders; and it formed no part of the sacred institute, when appointed by Jesus Christ. Imposition of hands was practised for secular as well as religious purposes. It was the ancient sign of designation to office, and used by superiors in the act of benediction. It never constituted the essence of ordination; for who ordained the Apostle Paul? The "separation" we read of in the 13th chapter of the Acts, was not a separation to the work of the Christian ministry; for it took place, many years after the Apostle had entered upon it, and was a separation to a particular mission on which he and Barnabas were sent to the Gentile Churches.

The Church of Rome has corrupted the institution of the Christian ministry, not only by making it a sacrament, but by connecting with it rites and ceremonies which are unauthorised by Scripture, and the usage of the primitive Churches; and by the *degrees* of office which have been created in the ministry itself. According to the canon of the Council of Trent, it is asserted, that "besides the priesthood, there are other major and minor orders, by which as it were by steps, the candidate rises to the priesthood.. The major orders, are those of deacon and sub-deacon; the minor, are those of acolyte, exorcist, lector, and door-keeper." Thus there are six distinct orders below the priesthood, and numerous gradations of dignity in the priesthood

itself; and in the usual style of this execrating council, those are pronounced accursed, who think or speak otherwise. You, my friends, know how to regard the impotent fulminations of their wrath; and because you find nothing about these offices in the word of God, you are taught to reject them as the traditions and commandments of men! In the scriptural rule of ecclesiastical discipline, we meet with no intimations of any offices as *permanent* under the Christian economy, but those of *Bishop* and *Deacon*: the one intended for the spiritual, and the other, for the secular concerns of the Church:—the one described by a great variety of names, such as *Pastor*, *Elder*, *Ruler*, &c. the other, an office of service or ministration, in reference to the temporal arrangements of Christian societies. To these offices only, the Apostle Paul refers in his epistle to the Philippians. The Elders of the Ephesian Church met him at Miletus, on his way to Jerusalem, and he addresses them, though they were all connected with *one* church, as *Bishops*, or *Overseers*! In the epistles to Timothy and Titus, expressly written on the subject of ecclesiastical offices, *Pastors* or *Bishops*, and *Deacons* are the only terms applied to the future and permanent administration of the Church. No intimations occur either directly or incidentally in reference to any other offices as necessary to the perpetuity of the Christian cause. The multiplication and degrees of office in the Church may be considered as one of the earliest symptoms of that degeneracy which afterwards terminated in the wide extended dominion of the See of Rome!

One of the consequences of the sacramental efficacy of orders, is the notion of the *indelibility* of the *priestly character*, about which a considerable portion of mysticism prevails, even among

some Protestant Churches. By the sacrament of orders it is asserted, that "a character is impressed, which can neither be blotted out, nor taken away—so that those who have been once properly ordained can never again become laymen, even if they do not discharge any of their ministerial functions!" This indelibility is made to arise out of the sacramental efficacy of ordination; and hence is maintained the preposterous idea, that whatever be the occupation of a man, however secular, or even exclusively secular, if he has once entered into orders, he is in orders till the end of his days! He may be a pastor, without a flock—a guide without followers—a ruler without subjects—an overseer without a charge—a minister without a service! And all this incomprehensible relationship is founded on the sacrament of orders! What can be more irrational and absurd?

It is not difficult to ascertain the origin of these mystical and indefensible opinions—opinions which, if they were now for the first time promulgated to the world, would be instantly discarded as fanatical and ridiculous; but which for ages have maintained an inexplicable dominion over the minds of men. At an early period in the history of the Church, Christianity became secularised by the innovations of an aspiring and ambitious priesthood; and every sentiment which could possibly tend to enhance their power, to invest them with indefinite and mysterious authority, and secure the subjection of the laity at their feet, was readily admitted and soon incorporated into their system. It was this principle that prepared the way for innumerable corruptions, and at last enthroned "the man of sin," and established in the earth, "the mystery of iniquity." It is truly lamentable, that some of

the ecclesiastical fictions of the canon law should be retained in the Protestant establishment of this kingdom ; and that while the doctrine of sacramental efficacy, in reference to orders is discarded, the notion of an indelible character should still prevail, and even be contended for, by those who boast of the apostolic purity of their hierarchy.

The last pseudo sacrament of the Church of Rome is *Matrimony*. I shall not detain you on this part of our investigation. It is so manifestly opposed to all their own definitions of a sacrament, and is so clearly unscriptural, to represent matrimony as, on any principle, an institution by which grace is either conferred or exhibited, that it is difficult to account for the origin of such a notion in the Christian Church. The passage generally adduced on this subject, is in Eph. v. 31. “ For this cause shall a man leave his father “ and his mother, and shall be joined unto his “ wife ; and they two shall be one flesh.” “ This “ is a great *mystery*, but I speak concerning “ Christ and the Church.” The Apostle calls the formation of Eve from Adam’s body, and his marriage with her, and the intimate union established between them by that marriage, *a great mystery*, because it contained an important emblematical meaning, concerning the union of believers with Christ, which he specifies in the 30th. verse. For there, in allusion to what Adam said concerning Eve, *This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*, the Apostle says, concerning Christ and believers—“ We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones ;” that is, we are parts of his body, the Church. By this application of Adam’s words concerning Eve to Christ and his Church, he insinuates—first, that the formation of Eve, of a rib taken out of Adam’s

body, was a figure of their regeneration ; secondly, that Adam's love to Eve on account of her being formed of his body, was a figure of Christ's love to believers, because they are become his body ; thirdly, that Adam's marriage with Eve was a figure of the eternal union of Christ with believers in heaven.”*

It is probable that this text would never have been brought forward to support the notion of matrimony being a sacrament, if the ambiguity of the term *sacrament*, and its application in senses altogether different from the ecclesiastical use of it, had not, *in sound at least*, appeared to sanction their peculiar opinion. It seems, from other passages in the Vulgate translation of the New Testament, from which the Roman Catholic version in our language has derived the word *sacrament*, that it was conceived to be equivalent in some cases to the word *mystery*, which is the literal rendering of the original.† It is, however, con-

* M'Knight, *in loco*.

† The Latin word *sacramentum*, in the classical usage of it, has no affinity to the Greek term, *μυστηριον*. It was generally applied to the *military oath of fidelity*, or to the pledge deposited by litigants, in a process to ensure obedience to the award of the judge. It is not difficult to conceive of an analogy, between the former and primary acceptation of the term, and the observance of those Christian rites which are generally considered to involve in them peculiarly sacred obligations. Hence, the application of the word to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. From this application, the transition would be easy to other religious observances, and the word would often mean—a sacred ceremony. It is clear, however, that in the ecclesiastical use of the term, it has a precise and definite meaning, according with the analogy that first suggested it, and confining it to purely symbolical institutions. But the Greek word *mystery*, never means in the New Testament, or the Septuagint, a sacred ceremony, in any sense of the term. It is invariably applied to what is conceived to be a *secret* (*arcanum, secretum*) either, because in itself incomprehensible, or because unknown before, or because of some hidden, con-

ceded by the authors of “the Faith of Catholics,” though they assert matrimony to be “a sacrament of the new law instituted by Jesus Christ,” that—“there is not *any passage in Scripture*, in which any express mention is made of the institution of this sacrament!” (Prop. xv. p. 387.) In the same style of wondrous consistency, they refer to the Fathers of the first three centuries, as authorities in support of their principle, that marriage is a sacrament; while the quotations respect merely the excellence and advantages of the marriage state, and therefore prove nothing. It is truly a singular specimen of reasoning, that they should first assert matrimony to be a sacrament instituted by Christ; then, in the face of their own proposition, under the head of *Scripture*, confess that “not any passage in Scripture” supports their assertion; and cite the *Fathers* as authorities, when the very citations they adduce have nothing to do with the subject. To complete the harmony of their system, though matrimony be a sacrament, and confer grace on the worthy receiver, they pronounce the highest eulogium on a life of celibacy, and will not allow their priests to partake of this sacramental grace!

cealed meaning, not generally obvious, in the thing to which it relates. In all these senses, the word occurs in the New Testament: and in the last sense, is used in the passage above cited. Eph, v. 31, and in several parts of the *Revelation* (i. 20. and xvii. 7.) In these last passages, the Vulgate translation retains the word *sacramentum*—(“*the sacrament of the seven stars—the sacrament of the woman!*”) There can be no doubt, that this singular use of the term, originated in the extension of the word *sacramentum*, to every thing deemed sacred and mysterious, whether referring to principles or practices, to facts or ceremonies. The reader will find an interesting dissertation on the words *mystery* and *sacrament*, in Dr. Campbell’s Preliminary Essays to his Translation of the Gospels. Vol. II.
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It is impossible not to be reminded of the prophetic delineation of their antichristian prohibitions: "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith—FORBIDDING TO MARRY, AND COMMANDING TO ABSTAIN FROM MEATS, WHICH GOD HATH CREATED TO BE RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING." (1 Tim. iv. 1—4.)

I cannot close this discussion, without two observations of practical importance. The *first* respects the danger of departing from the simplicity of Christian institutions, as they are detailed and enjoined in the New Testament. Every instance of departure involves in it a principle, which prepares the way for still wider deviations. I am aware that some recorded observances were evidently local and temporary, arising out of the state and manners of society at the period of their adoption. But such as were designed to be of universal and perpetual obligation, are every where practicable, and are adapted to the condition and circumstances of the Christian Church in all ages. It may be assumed as an indisputable axiom in scriptural Church-polity, that every thing *essential* to the constitution and administration of the Church of Christ, is clearly and intelligibly revealed; and that to impose, by human authority, what is not thus revealed, is an usurpation of the sacred prerogatives of HIM, who describes the Church, as HIS kingdom, and says, "CALL NO MAN MASTER ON EARTH; ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST."

The last observation I would suggest, respects the necessity of ascertaining whether or not we possess that "inward and spiritual grace," of which the Christian sacraments are the "outward and visible signs." It is to be feared, that thousands, while they disclaim the corruptions of Popery, retain some portion of its spirit, and

indulge in fatal security respecting their spiritual and eternal state, because of their sacramental observances, and their external relation to the Christian Church! They have been baptised—they partake of the Lord's supper—they go through the circuit of outward services, and they hope all will be "well with them." My friends, "be not deceived!" The admonition is as necessary for you, as it was for Nicodemus : "*except a man be born again—born from above—born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*" The administration of rites, even of divine institution, will never by its own inherent efficacy purify your moral nature, and render you "meet to be a partaker of the heavenly inheritance." Your understandings must be divinely enlightened, your hearts renewed, your affections supremely directed to spiritual and heavenly objects, your habits and conduct regulated by the laws of God—before you can "enter the kingdom" of glory in the future world, or be on scriptural principles a true subject of that kingdom in the present state! You must become "new creatures in Christ Jesus," before you can enjoy the blessings of the "great salvation." "Neither circumcision availleth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but—**A NEW CREATURE.**" What the institutions of the Mosaic economy could never effect, the less splendid and imposing services of the Christian dispensation will not impart by their own efficacy; and to be satisfied with "bodily service, will profit you little!" Then, "marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again." May the prayer of the penitent Psalmist be individually ours : "Create in me, O God, a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.—**Then** shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness!"

LECTURE VI.

ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS, AND THE USE OF IMAGES.

ONE of the most singular facts which presents itself to a reflecting mind, when contemplating the records of antiquity and the present state of the world, is *the general propensity to idolatry*, which prevailed so extensively in former times, and which is still so widely predominant, amongst a vast proportion of the human race. That there is only ONE, self-existent and underived divinity, the first cause of all things, and the exclusive object of religious adoration, is a truth, supported by the highest degree of moral demonstration. To preserve the authority and importance of this truth, appears to have been one of the immediate ends of divine revelation in its earliest discoveries. When the fatal tendency to multiply the objects of religious homage, displayed itself amongst the remote descendants of Noah, the Almighty revealed his will to Abraham, and selected his posterity to be the future depositaries of sacred truth, and to perpetuate the knowledge of himself as “the only Lord God.” While the gradual developement of his designs of mercy through the great Messiah, was the primary and ultimate object of revelation, it was directly subservient to

the counteraction of idolatrous principles. We find the severest denunciations of wrath, against all the forms and appearances of idolatry; and on no subject are the prohibitions of Scripture more explicit, more frequently repeated, or enforced by more awful and tremendous sanctions. In the prophetic writings, all the ardour and vehemence of impassioned feeling, and sarcastic reprobation, are employed to expose its absurdity as well as its impiety; and to reclaim the victims of its infatuating and degrading influence from their senseless superstition.

There are two kinds of idolatry prohibited in the decalogue. The first consists in performing acts of religious worship to any being or beings, whether existing in reality or in the imagination, besides the *one, only, and true God*. This species of idolatry is a violation of *the first commandment*: “**THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.**”

The second species of idolatry consists in the use of material representations of the true God, and his attributes, whether by images, statues, or paintings, for the purposes of religious worship; or the use of material representations of any other objects for such purposes. This is minutely and expressly forbidden in the second commandment. “**THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE,**” &c. (Exod. xx. 3—6.) The propriety of this latter prohibition arises from the *immateriality* of the divine essence. On this account, it is impossible for man to form a suitable image of the Deity, even in his mind. The imagination can combine only the ideas which originate in the impressions produced on the senses. The supreme being is not obvious to the senses, and therefore every attempt to form a visible representation of his nature or his attri-

butes, must be altogether erroneous and pernicious. It tends to divert the mind from the Creator to the creature, and is in its principle and operation, idolatrous.

It is no objection to this view of the prohibition, that God has represented his character and perfections by allusions to material objects and earthly relations; nor does it affect the principle of our reasoning, that under the ancient dispensation, he employed material symbols of his presence. The worshippers of God were taught to distinguish between himself and the tokens of that presence. No one ever saw God; and such was the nature of the symbols themselves, that they could not be the subjects of imitation. As to the representations of the Almighty, in terms and phrases borrowed from the corporeal attributes of mortal beings, they are evidently, *figurative modes of language*, and therefore incapable of being misunderstood, except by persons of incorrigible and almost idiotic stupidity.

The prohibition of idolatry, and of every principle and practice which might directly or remotely lead to it, is strongly confirmed by the New Testament revelation. Our Lord resisted the most artful attack of temptation, by citing the solemn command of the Almighty: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!" When the inhabitants of Lystra would have paid religious homage to Barnabas and Paul, they refused the impious adoration, and asserted the exclusive claims of the "living God," to their worship and devotion. The Apostle John, in the visions of Patmos, overwhelmed by the grandeur of the scenes which had been disclosed to his view, and overpowered by the splendour of his celestial guide, "fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, who

"shewed him those things." But instantly the angel declined the proffered adoration : " SEE
" THOU DO IT NOT—I AM THY FELLOW-SERVANT
" —WORSHIP GOD." (Revel. xxii. 8, 9.)

From the greater simplicity and information which distinguish the Christian economy above that which preceded it, it might be expected, that its principles would be more opposed to every idolatrous tendency, than even those of the former dispensation ; and that whatever might remotely tend to the violation of the first two commands of the moral law, would be directly hostile to its spirituality.

It requires little argumentation to prove, that *the invocation of saints and the use of images, for the purposes of religious worship*, are in their principles most unscriptural, and in their practical results, most awfully pernicious. I am aware, that much sophistical dexterity is employed on these subjects ; and that idolatry is explicitly disclaimed. I would by no means involve our opponents in the charge of direct and intentional idolatry ; but I need nothing more than their own avowed statements, and their universal practice, to substantiate the charge of *idolatrous tendencies* ! Nor are these tendencies remote and incidental : they attach to the system in all its modifications, and necessarily arise out of their own established rites. Enter their temples ; observe the supplicants devoutly kneeling at the altar, directing their eyes to the crucifix, or bending before the statue of a favourite saint ; listen to their praises and their prayers ; hear them invoke the blessing of the Virgin, and the intercessions of the saints, almost in the same petitions which they employ when addressing the Almighty, through the mediation of the Saviour. What is the specific and obvious difference in the outward tokens of venera-

tion and homage, between their mode of praying to the only true God, and their invocation of his creatures? Suppose a heathen, who had never heard of the Christian religion, and had been accustomed only to the rites of Polytheism, were to visit a country where the ceremonies of the Roman Church are observed with greatest effect, and are invested with all the splendid fascinations of art, what would be the natural impressions produced upon his mind? Would he not conclude, and even be authorised in concluding, that they also had “*gods many and lords many?*” Surrounded by statues and paintings, and observing the frequency and fervour with which the various objects of veneration were regarded, he would consider them all to be *divinities*; and as the consequence of this discovery, would feel far less repugnance to associate with them, than would be excited by the simplicity and spirituality of a purer ritual. It would be of no avail to tell this observer, that there were different degrees of worship. The very association would prove an identity in the principle; and in some cases, the appearance of greater attention paid to a saint, or to the Virgin, than to the Supreme Being, would be instantly recognised as not dissimilar to the degrees of veneration with which his own idols were regarded. How great would be the surprise of such an inquirer, on being told, notwithstanding all these appearances to the contrary, that they acknowledged and professed to regard the authority of that volume, which prohibited idolatry in its most refined, as well as its gross and monstrous forms, and which required the acts of religious homage to be exclusively paid to the great Jehovah!

An attentive observer of principles will ascertain their genuine tendency, not from a few solitary

instances, in which various causes may so modify and counteract their natural operation, as to prevent the developement of their true character, but from their general effect. We must not judge of the existing and prevailing state of opinions amongst the members of the Roman Church, from the specimens we may occasionally meet with of intelligence, and discrimination in this or other countries. The collision of free inquiry, intercourse with persons of other denominations, and a more frequent use of the Holy Scriptures, will amazingly alter and soften the asperities of the system. I am perfectly aware, that every well-informed Roman Catholic would instantly disclaim the imputation of idolatry; but the question is not, what is thought by persons of reflection and culture, and by what subtle and metaphysical distinctions they can support the peculiarities of their religious practice—but simply—what is the natural tendency of their principles on the great mass of their community; and what is the actual state of opinions and of habits, arising out of these principles?

“ It is undeniable, that the common people know nothing of the subtle explications and evasions of their cautious divines; and that whatever worship they pay, they pay it to saints and angels, to images and relics.”* The wildest and most superstitious ideas are cherished by the rites and ceremonies which are every day prac-

* M. Chateaubriand has painted and varnished the modern popery of France, the most enlightened of Catholic countries, with all the art in his power; yet he frequently has passages of this kind:—“ Does the believer suffer? He prays to his little “ image and is comforted. Does he want the return of his rela- “ tive or his friend? He makes a vow, and takes the pilgrim’s “ staff; he springs over the Alps or the Pyrenees, and visits our “ lady at Loretto, or St. James in Gallicia; he prostrates him- “ self, he prays the saint to restore him his son, (perhaps a poor

tised in their invocation of the “ blessed Virgin,” and in the terms of adoration they apply to the canonized. Thousands are led to believe, that at the same moment of time, the saints, or at least the most popular of them, are attending to their petitions and their vows ; and they could not possess a more exalted idea of a Divine Being than to invest him with the attribute of *omnipresence*. They may not actually and in all cases, worship the *image* of the saint, though it will frequently happen that the habit of venerating the sign with such devout and constant homage, will lead the ignorant to think more of the emblem than of the reality ; but they will inevitably transfer to the creature on whom they fix their confidence, those affections of mind which ought to be exclusively devoted to the great object of the Christian’s faith and adoration. It not unfrequently happens, in those countries where the effect of these superstitions is most predominant, that a far greater number of *offerings*, as grateful acknowledgments of benefits received, are presented to the statue of the Virgin or some tutelary saint, than to the Son of God himself !

“ Many of our divines,” says the acute and learned Dr. Middleton, in his celebrated letter from Rome, “ have, I know, with much learning “ and solid reasoning, charged and effectually “ proved, the crime of idolatry on the Church of “ Rome : but these controversies (in which there “ is still something plausible to be said on the

“ sailor-boy wandering on the seas,) to prolong his father’s days, “ or to raise his good wife from the bed of sickness. His heart “ is lightened—he turns back to his hut—covered with shells, “ he makes the hamlets echo with his conch ; and in wild and “ tender notes, he chaunts the condescension of Mary, the “ mother of God.”—*Genie du Christianisme*, tom. ii. p. 334.— (Dr. Smith’s “ Reasons of the Protestant Religion,” p. 34.)

“ other side, and where the charge is constantly
“ denied, and with much subtlety evaded,) are
“ not capable of giving that conviction which I
“ immediately received from my senses, the surest
“ witnesses of fact in all cases, and which no man
“ can fail to be furnished with, who sees Popery
“ as it is exercised in Italy, in the full pomp and
“ display of its pageantry ; and practising all its
“ arts and powers without caution or reserve.” *

* * * * * * * *

“ The noblest heathen temple now remaining
“ in the world, is the Pantheon or Rotunda ;
“ which, as the inscription over the portico informs
“ us, ‘ having been impiously dedicated of old
“ by Agrippa to Jove and all the gods, was
“ piously reconsecrated by Pope Boniface the
“ fourth, to the blessed Virgin and all the saints.’
“ With this single alteration, it serves as exactly
“ for all the purposes of the Popish, as it did for
“ the Pagan worship, for which it was built. For
“ as in the old temple every one might find the
“ God of his country, and address himself to that
“ deity, whose religion he was most devoted to ;
“ so it is the same thing now ; every one chuses
“ the patron whom he likes best ; and one may see
“ here different services, going on at the same
“ time at different altars, with distinct congrega-
“ tions around them, just as the inclinations of the
“ people lead them, to the worship of this or that
“ particular saint.

“ And what better title can the new demi-gods
“ shew, to the adoration now paid to them, than
“ the old ones, whose shrines they have usurped ?
“ Or how comes it to be less criminal to worship
“ images, erected by the Pope, than those which
“ Agrippa, or that which Nebuchadnezzar set up ?
“ If there be any real difference, most people, I
“ dare say, will be apt to determine in favour of

" the old possessors : for those heroes of antiquity
 " were raised up into gods, and received divine
 " honours, for some signal benefits, of which they
 " had been the authors to mankind ; as the invention
 " of arts and sciences ; or of something highly
 " useful and necessary to life: whereas, of the
 " Romish saints, it is certain that many of them
 " were never heard of, but in their own legends
 " of fabulous histories ; and many more, instead
 " of any services done to mankind, owe all the
 " honours now paid to them, to their vices or
 " their errors ; whose merit, like that of Demetrius, in the Acts, was their skill of raising
 " rebellions in defence of an idol, and throwing
 " kingdoms into convulsions for the sake of some
 " gainful imposture.

" And as it is in the Pantheon, it is just the
 " same in all the other heathen temples, that still
 " remain in Rome ; they have only pulled down
 " one idol to set up another ; and changed rather
 " the name than the object of their worship.
 " Thus, the little temple of Vesta, near the Tiber,
 " mentioned by Horace, is now possessed by the
 " Madonna of the sun ; that of Tortuna Virilis,
 " by Mary, the Egyptian ; that of Saturn, (where
 " the public treasure was anciently kept) by St.
 " Adrian ; that of Romulus and Remus in the Via
 " Sacra, by two other brothers, Cosmus and Damianus ; that of Antonine the godly, by Lawrence the saint ; but for my part, I should
 " sooner be tempted, to prostrate myself before
 " the statue of a Romulus or an Antonine, than
 " that of a Lawrence or a Damian ; and give
 " divine honours rather with Pagan Rome, to the
 " founders of empires, than with Popish Rome,
 " to the founders of monasteries."*

* Dr. Conyer's Middleton's Letter from Rome, p. 132, and pp. 161—164.

It is impossible in this country, where the Roman Catholic religion is so much softened and attempered by the diffusion of Protestant principles, to form an accurate conception of the influence of its peculiar observances on the habits and opinions of a people, where no such counteraction is felt. Here its advocates learn to gloss over their system; to palliate and explain as ingeniously and rationally as they can, its various absurdities; and to give it that modification, which shall render it in the least degree repugnant to the prevailing opinions of an opposite system. Unpatronised by the state, and without the splendid resources which Popery commands and renders subservient to her interests in other countries, she appears in her plainest attire. With few exceptions, we seldom meet with statues and numerous paintings of the saints in their places of worship; hence a greater degree of mental abstraction is requisite in their service, and *invisible* beings are more frequently the objects of their devotion. But what a different scene presents itself to our view, in the pomp and pageantry of foreign Churches! There the magic power of genius, and all the contrivances of art, are employed to embody in the forms of beauty and of grandeur, the numerous objects of their veneration. Every thing is materialised, and rendered obvious to the senses; and it is the wildness of a dream, to talk of *not worshipping* these mimic representations of celestial beings. A few philosophic thinkers may abstract their minds from what is local and material, but the great mass of their devotees are altogether absorbed by the statue or the painting immediately before them. They consider the saint or angel, to be so identified with the representation, that they imagine in innumerable cases, that miraculous works have been performed by

them; and the voice of supplication, the votive offering, and the song of praise, are addressed to the creature of an artist's skill.

The general argument urged in defence of images, is derived from their assumed subserviency to the purposes of devotion. It is alleged, that they assist in “reducing the wandering “thoughts of men, and enliven their memories “towards heavenly things.”* The passages of “Scripture, cited in support of this practice, are from the Old Testament, and respect the ornamental figures and symbolical representations of the Jewish temple. It is said that these “various figures (of cherubim, &c.) were made by the express command and sanction of God, given to Moses and Solomon, and dedicated to religious purposes, after the prohibition so distinctly marked: (Exod. xx. 4.) “Thou shalt not make “to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness “of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is “in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth; *thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them.*” From this mode of reasoning we are taught to infer, that the prohibition was not designed to be strictly and literally regarded: and thus do they “set aside the commandment of God by their tradition!” All the while it is most conveniently forgotten, that the *cherubim* and *carved work* were not constructed for the purposes of worship and adoration. The Jews did not “bow down to them nor serve them;” and therefore such citations are totally insufficient for the defence of their practice. In the same style of argumentation the erection of the “brazen serpent” is adduced in support of “pictures and images.” (*Faith of Catholics*, p. 427.) But it happens most

* “*The Faith of Catholics.*” Prop. xvii. p. 414.

unfortunately for this Scripture-proof, that by the divine command, Hezekiah “ brake in pieces the “ brazen serpent that Moses had made; for “ unto those days, the children of Israel did burn “ incense unto it; and he called it *Nehushtan*, “ i. e. *brass work.*” (2 Kings xviii. 4.) And never had a piece of metal such a claim to veneration as that! If it had been preserved to the present age, what shrines and temples, and splendid services, would have been constructed for *Nehushtan!*

There is one fact in reference to the use of images and other material representations in religious worship, which appears of special importance in the present inquiry. If they actually tended to promote that devotion which is acceptable in the sight of God, it is singular, that we have no intimation of this tendency in the discourses of our Lord, or in the writings of his Apostles. Surely they were as well acquainted with human nature, and knew as accurately what might be subservient to the great ends of religious worship, as the doctors of the Council of Trent, or the Fathers of the Church of Rome. Surely the Apostle Paul loved the Saviour as ardently and devoutly as a modern Roman Catholic; and yet, he needed not any sensible representation, to “ reduce his thoughts or enliven his memory.” And if he had imagined that spiritual affection towards the Redeemer, would have been more powerfully excited by such methods, and have been acceptable in the sight of God, he would most unquestionably have been instructed to sanction the practice. But it was impossible that he should have entertained such a conception, when the language of the decalogue so explicitly forbids all the use of images, for the purposes of religious veneration and in the worship of

God. Happy would it have been for the interests of pure and undefiled religion, if the conduct of *Epiphanius* had been invariably followed in the Christian Church. He would not suffer even a picture of the Saviour to be in a place of worship, much less to receive outward and visible signs of adoration. "How," says the learned Bishop Bull, "would his indignation have been inflamed, "if he had seen, not only pictures, but massy "images in Churches, and the people praying, "kneeling, and burning incense before them!"

It is pretended by the advocates of such practices, that there are three kinds of worship or adoration. To these distinct kinds of worship, three names are applied. The highest they term, *latria* (*λατρεία*) and appropriate it exclusively to the divine being; the lowest they term *doulaia* (*δουλεία*) and render this species of adoration to saints and angels; and the third is a middle kind of worship styled *hyperdoulaia* (*υπερδουλεία*) not so exalted as the first, nor so common as the last, but something between both, and this they ascribe exclusively to the blessed Virgin. They have also many scholastic distinctions; such as *supreme and subordinate, absolute and relative, terminative and transient, proper and improper, primary and secondary*, &c. but these are so puerile and trifling that they do not deserve the slightest attention.* Words frequently extend and contract their signification,

* The term *λατρεία* means *service*, and is applied to religious duty in general, whether it be in the direct acts of worship, or in any other service which the will of God may require. (Exod. xii. 25, 26.) Rom. ix. 4. xii. 1.)

Δουλεία is literally a state of slavery or bondage, and is used in no other sense in the New Testament. Its application to worship or religious homage in any view of it, arises from the ecclesiastical usage of the term. In its verbal form, it is applied both to the service of God and the service of sin; and conveys

and hence the term *worship* in our language, was formerly applied to civil respect, as well as to religious adoration. But there could be no confusion of ideas in this case. The common sense of mankind is always sufficient to preserve them from misconception: and no one ever imagined that a magistrate was to be adored because he is styled *his worship*!

But you will inquire on what principles the invocation of saints and angels is defended? “Catholics believe,” say the authors before cited, “that the angels and saints in heaven, replenished “with charity, pray for us, the fellow members “of the latter here upon earth; that they rejoice “in our conversation; that seeing God, they see “and know in him, all things suitable to their “happy state; and that God *may be* inclined to “hear their requests made in our behalf, and for “their sakes may grant us many favours—therefore we believe, that it is *good* and *profitable* “to invoke their intercession.—Can this manner “of invocation be more injurious to Christ our “*mediator*, than it is for one Christian to beg the “prayers of another here on earth?” (*The Faith of Catholics.* Prop. xix. p. 431.) In this extract we have the cautious and moderate language of an English advocate of the Roman Church. The principal argument is founded on the supposed

the idea of *subjection*, rather than *devotion*, in all the instances of its religious use. (Gal. iv. 8. Rom. vi. 6. 1 Thess. i. 9, 15.

Υπερδουλεια is a compound term of their own, and not unfitly describes their excessive slavery. The distinctions supported by these terms are purely gratuitous, and of no authority whatever, either on the principles of criticism or theology. Nay, such is their inconsistency in the use of them, that they are sometimes employed by their own writers promiscuously; and even the word *λατρεια* is applied to the worship which they pay to the cross!

analogy between the Christian duty of praying for one another on earth, and the actual intercession of saints and angels in heaven; and as it is the main point in this part of the controversy, it is proper to examine it minutely.

i. If it be admitted that saints and angels in heaven are acquainted with the circumstances of the Church on earth, and feel devoutly interested in every event which affects its prosperity, it does not follow that they ever engage in the work of *prayer and intercession*. They are so perfectly acquainted with the principles and operations of the divine government, and their happiness is so complete, that we cannot suppose prayer is requisite for them. All the representations of the heavenly state in the sacred volume convey the idea, that its blessed inhabitants are *exclusively* employed in grateful adoration and devout contemplation. “There is *joy* in heaven over sinners that repent”—“they serve God day and night in his temple”—“they sing a new song”—“Worthy is the Lamb,” &c.; but we never read of their intercessions and their prayers. On earth it was the privilege of the saints to intercede for each other. By such exercises of Christian fellowship their mutual love was promoted, and their obligations to sympathy, kindness, forgiveness, and all the duties of active benevolence were strengthened and confirmed. But there is no imperfection in heaven; and therefore no occasion for the display of those tempers and affections, which are rendered necessary in this world, by the sins and sufferings of the present state. They “see the Saviour as he is”—“they know as they are known”—faith and hope are no longer requisite to their felicity; and their enlarged comprehension of the plans and purposes of the Almighty renders those exercises unnecessary,

which were suited only to a state of probation and trial.

ii. In the next place, saints and angels cannot be supposed to possess a *universal* knowledge of the states and conditions of mankind, and therefore they cannot be the objects of prayer and invocation. It is justly argued in defence of the divinity of Jesus Christ, that prayer was addressed to him by the primitive disciples, and that they were known and described as those, who "called upon his name." From this circumstance it is inferred, that Jesus Christ must possess the attributes of *omniscience* and *omnipresence*, or he could not be addressed in prayer; it could not be the duty of all men, in all circumstances, to address their prayers to Jesus Christ. The same mode of reasoning will apply to the subject before us. It cannot be "good and profitable" to invoke the aid and intercession of the saints, unless the saints can hear and attend to such invocation. If they can do this, they must possess universal knowledge: and if they possess that knowledge that fits them at one and the same moment to attend to the prayers and supplications of Christians in every part of the world, they must possess the attributes of *divinity*. But this cannot be supposed without the grossest impiety; and therefore the practice of such invocation is unwarrantable and absurd.

iii. In the third place, there is an essential difference between requesting a fellow Christian on earth to pray for me, and *praying* to that fellow Christian, *directly* soliciting from him and through his intercession the blessings I need. Who ever thought it his duty to present on his knees a petition for spiritual favours from a living saint? If any of the first disciples were now on earth, can it be for a moment imagined, that they would

permit their fellow disciples to offer to them, *in religious services*, all those outward and bodily demonstrations of homage, which they present to the Almighty, and make them the direct and immediate objects of their devotion? Is there not every reason to believe that they would instantly disclaim the proffered veneration, and cry out—
“ SIRS, WHY DO YE THESE THINGS, WE ALSO
“ ARE MEN OF LIKE PASSIONS WITH YOU ?”

We never request an *unknown* fellow Christian to pray for us; and it would never enter into the mind of a man to imagine, that a *mental* desire, not expressed in language, or by intelligible signs, should be addressed to an *unknown* Christian. As the object of mutual intercession is the promotion of mutual fellowship and mutual advantage, in one way or another, previous knowledge of one another, through some medium of communication is, absolutely indispensable. But how can this mutual knowledge be possessed in the present case? How can I *know* any of the saints in heaven, or be assured that they *know me*? I may indulge romantic conjectures and reveries; but what scriptural warrant have I for such conceptions? It is possible I may be known to them, but they have never been exhibited as objects of personal knowledge to me; and therefore it is the fiction of fancy and not the exercise of faith, that would lead me to address them.

iv. Such an invocation of saints and angels is altogether unsupported by scriptural authority. There is not one passage adduced on the subject by its most zealous advocates, that will bear the slightest investigation. It is customary to cite a text from the *Apocrypha*, (2 Maccabees xv. 14.) in which there is an account of Jeremiah appearing in a vision, “ praying for the people;” but without remarking that there is no authority in

this book, it is obvious, that a vision of Jeremiah interceding in a special emergency, on behalf of the Jews, by no means proves that the Jews would have done right in praying to Jeremiah.— They cite also the declaration of our Lord, that “there is joy in heaven among the angels of God, “over one sinner that repenteth.”—But how this proves that the angels are to be invoked and prayed to, it is for their ingenuity to demonstrate. There is, however, one text which I shall take the liberty of presenting to your attention, as bearing directly on the subject before us. (Col. ii. 18.) “LET NO MAN BEGUILLE YOU OF YOUR “REWARD IN A VOLUNTARY HUMILITY, AND “WORSHIPPING OF ANGELS, (*θρησκεία των αγγελών*) “INTRUDING INTO THOSE THINGS, WHICH HE “HATH NOT SEEN, VAINLY PUFFED UP BY HIS “FLESHLY MIND; AND NOT HOLDING THE HEAD.” “It should seem,” says an anonymous author, “there was then a sort of Judaizing Christians, who supposing the law to be given by angels, would have introduced the worship of them into the Church: and their pretence was plausible, *humility* and *modesty*. They taught that ‘the great Lord of the universe was as little to be seen and approached, as to be comprehended; and therefore that no man ought to dare to address him immediately, but by the interposition of angels, bringing first their prayers to them, in order to their being offered up to God.’* This the synod of Laodicea (held in the fourth century) plainly forbids, calling it a “*hidden idolatry and*

* “It evidently appears,” observes Dr. Doddridge, “from several passages in *Philo*, to have been the opinion of that learned Jew, that angels were messengers who presented our prayers to God, as well as brought down his favours to us. He represents this view of the matter as most *humble* and reverential; and there is no doubt but it prevailed among other Jews,

a forsaking the Lord Jesus Christ, and approaching to idolatry." Theodoret upon the text, calls it a ' vice that continued for a long time in Phrygia and Pisidia ; and that even in his time, there ' were oratories to be seen among them to St. Michael the archangel.'

" *By intruding into those things that are not seen*, we are to understand, taking the liberty to talk of things that God has not revealed, and therefore speaking at random and by guess, of those matters ; as indeed the schoolmen do, as will appear to any person that looks into their divinity, about the number, orders, names, and ministry of the holy angels. *Not holding the head*, that is—making use of the mediation of angels, and forsaking our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God hath constituted the Head of his Church, and the only mediator between God and man."*

v. The invocation of saints and angels directly interferes with the mediation of Jesus Christ, and tends to divert the attention of men from his intercession, as the only meritorious cause of our acceptance with God. On no subject is the language of Scripture more explicit than on this. It asserts the sufficiency and EXCLUSIVENESS of the Saviour's intercession in the most intelligible and unequivocal terms. Jesus saith, " No man cometh unto the Father but by me."—" Through him we both have access by one spirit to the Father."—" There is ONE GOD AND ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

and that the gospel refers to this.—It is justly remarked by Bishop Burnet, that had it been the Apostle's intention to give the least encouragement to any religious addresses to saints and angels, this would have been a very natural occasion of introducing the subject, and adjusting its proper boundaries." Doddridge's Fam. Expos : *in loco.* (Burnet on the Articles, p. 225.)

* " *Papery not founded on Scripture.*" p. 243.

(John xiv. 6. Eph. ii. 18. 1 Tim. ii. 5.) The last citation is remarkably decisive. It asserts the unity of the divine nature and the unity of the mediatorship in the same terms. As the former excludes all other divinities, so the latter excludes all other mediators. There is *one* mediator, in the same sense in which there is *one* God; and as the idea of associating any other being with God in the exercises of devotion would be idolatry, whatever might be the specious and sophistical distinctions of human ingenuity, so the notion of associating other mediators with Jesus Christ, is an unhallowed and sacrilegious impeachment of the sufficiency and merit of the Saviour's intercession.

But it will be said, the saints and angels *intercede with Christ*, and Christ intercedes with the Father! Where, I inquire, is the scriptural proof in support of this strange conception?—An intercessor with Christ!—After all the assurances of his willingness and ability to “ save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him ;”—after all the urgent and impressive invitations to make an *immediate* and *direct* application to him, as the only mediator between God and man! My Christian friends, I congratulate you, that you have not “ so learned Christ.” You have been taught to consider his mediation, as ever accessible, and to rejoice in it as the only basis of your confidence towards God! In your estimation, CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL!

“ Let others trust what names they please,
“ Their saints and angels boast ;
“ We've no such advocates as these
“ Nor pray to th' heavenly host.

“ Jesus alone shall bear our cries
“ Up to his Father's throne ;
“ He, dearest Lord ! perfumes our sighs
“ And sweetens every groan !”

vi. In the last place, the practice of invoking by prayer and supplication the aid and intercession of saints and angels, is directly idolatrous in its tendency. It is one of the declarations of Pope Pius' Creed, that "the saints reigning together with Christ are to be invocated." Now whatever be their distinctions, let us inquire what is their practice? They pray to them with the same outward expressions of homage and adoration, which they employ when addressing the Almighty. In their praises and thanksgivings, they join the angels and the blessed Virgin, and the saints, together with God, as if they were *all* in the same order of brotherly society, and equally the objects of our invocation. They direct their prayers immediately to the saints. They supplicate their help and assistance in the same language they would appropriate to the Deity. Their addresses to the Virgin Mary are singularly impious. At an early period, even in the fifth century, *St. Ephrem*, of Edessa, thus invoked the aid of the Virgin—"We fly to thy patronage, "Holy Mother of God; protect and guard us "*under the wings of thy mercy and kindness.*"* One of their writers actually compiled an office of devotion for the Virgin, from the book of Psalms, applying to her the identical prayers and praises addressed to Jehovah. Thus—"Have "mercy upon me, O Lady, according to thy "great mercy," &c. "The heavens declare thy glory, O Lady!" "O come, let us sing to our Lady," &c.† In the same style of unhallowed adoration, the Virgin is continually invoked as the "gate of heaven—the refuge of sinners—the con- "solation of the afflicted—the ark of the cove- "nant—the help of Christians," &c. &c.‡ One

* Cited by the authors of *the Faith of Catholics.* p. 437.

† *Bonaventure* in *Psalterium.*

‡ See their missals and breviaries.

of these writers, says—"If any one be afraid of "the Son, who sits at the right hand of the Father, "because he is judge, let him go to the Mother." And accordingly they recommend themselves to her merciful protection, even in their dying moments—"O Mary! Mother of grace, sweet par- "tent of mercy, do thou protect us from the "enemy, and receive us in the hour of death!" In a hymn from one of their "offices," they are taught to say, "O blessed Virgin *who expiatest* "our sins, with the authority of a Mother, com- "mand the Redeemer."—On some occasions this doxology has been used—"Glory to God, *to the* "blessed Virgin Mary our Lady, and to Jesus "Christ our Lord!" But on this subject it is needless to enlarge the number of citations: the constant practice of the Roman Catholics, in every part of the world, furnishes abundant illustrations of the fact.

After such examples, I think it will be impossible for them to refute the charge, of idolatrous tendency being inseparably connected with the principle and practice of invocation. With respect to the homage paid to the Virgin, it is unnecessary to say, that not a shadow of scriptural authority is or can be adduced, except the language of the angelic salutation before the miraculous conception of the Messiah. "The angel said —"Hail! highly favoured, the Lord is with thee! "blessed art thou among women!" The Virgin also reflecting on the peculiar honour conferred upon her, exclaims—"Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." (Luke i. 28, 48.) But do these passages warrant the practice of adoring the Virgin, praying to her, and rendering all the acts of homage and worship? Can any single instance of such adoration be found in the account of the primitive Churches in the New Testa-

ment? Is there one exhortation, or one allusion, even of a remote and incidental nature, in all the sacred volume, which can on any principle of construction support this practice? Not the semblance of authority can be derived from the word of God; and the conduct of the Saviour towards her, seems as if prophetically intended for the very purpose of preventing any sanction from being derived in favour of such idolatrous veneration, from his own personal behaviour. When she discovered on one occasion a disposition to dictate to the Saviour, as to the exercise of his miraculous powers, he replied—"Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not come." (John ii. 4.) Just before his death he commended her with filial affection to the care of his beloved disciple; and if in any circumstances it would have been natural to have stated her claims to their full extent, it would have been when performing the last act of duty towards her. But not a syllable of that affecting interview relates to the subject, and the whole of the disciple's obligation is confined to the discharge of filial attentions. "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother—"Woman, behold thy Son!" —Then saith he to the disciple—Behold thy Mother! And from that hour that disciple took "her to his own home." (John xix. 26, 27.) Amidst all the expressions of strong devotional feeling in the writings of the Apostles, and in the history of the first Church, when upon the principle assumed by our opponents, the full force of such veneration would be displayed to the blessed Virgin, we never meet with her name, or a single reference to her high and distinguishing honours. Now if the practice of the Roman Catholic Church had obtained "from the beginning," it is morally im-

possible, that so distinguishing and characteristic a feature of the system would have been so uniformly concealed. In one shape or another it would have been adverted to; and if no formal statements had appeared, incidental references would have proved the reality of such devout homage. But we meet with no references at all; and therefore the presumption is clear and unquestionable, that the New Testament Churches knew nothing of the practice, and that its origin must have been subsequent to the period of primitive Christianity.

It is a favourite mode of declaiming amongst Roman Catholic divines, to represent Jesus Christ as far more willing to listen to the prayers and intercessions of the Virgin, than to those of other saints.* The consequence of such representations is obvious. More prayers are addressed to the Virgin in the Roman Catholic Church, than to any other saints; and in some services there are ten *ave Marias* for one *Pater-noster*. You have only to consult their missals and breviaries and catechisms, and you might imagine there were four persons in the Godhead, and that the Virgin Mary sustained the high prerogative of being the

* A popular preacher of their communion, not long ago, harangued his hearers on this subject, in the following strain. “ If any of you were requested by some of your friends to grant “ any particular favour, you might not be disposed to think “ much about it—but if your *mother*—she who conceived you—“ who carried you in her womb—who watched over you in your “ infancy—if *she* came and interceded with you, you would “ instantly attend to your *mother*! Thus, the blessed Virgin “ intercedes with her Son. He cannot deny the request of his “ *mother*.—Oh, then, be sure to secure the intercession of the “ Virgin!” Such a style of argument is a convincing illustration of the pitiable weakness and absurdity of their principles. Every attentive reader of the New Testament will perceive at once its grossly unscriptural character.

fourth. Far different, my friends, are your feelings of veneration. You are taught to imitate her humility, to admire the simplicity and acquiescence of her faith, and to rejoice in the high dignity conferred upon her, in the mysterious arrangements of providence: and you exclaim—

“ Let every nation call her bless’d,
“ And endless years prolong her fame ;
“ But God alone must be adored,
“ Holy and reverend is his name.”

The “ communion of saints” is one of the articles of our creed; and is generally cited by the advocates of invocation in support of the practice. It is asserted that our communion with the saints in heaven, consists in addressing to them our prayers and supplications. But this is purely gratuitous and assumed. The “whole family in heaven and earth,” is composed of all the redeemed and sanctified and glorified; and though part of the family is in the heavenly world, and the remaining part, “pilgrims and strangers upon earth,” they are still ONE FAMILY. Their communion consists in their common relation to the Saviour who is their HEAD, the source of their enjoyments and the object of their supreme affection; and in their mutual relation to each other, as brethren, “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” Hence the equality of their privileges, and the similarity of their character. They are all “one in Christ Jesus,” and “Christ is all and in all.” It is your privilege, my Christian friends, to cherish with affectionate regard the memories of the faithful, who are departed. Be “followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises;” but let this be the limit of your veneration. They are not omnipresent and almighty; they are not the objects of supplication

and prayer; they have no claim on your worship; they are only your "fellow-servants," advanced to a higher station, and engaged in nobler service than that which occupies your attention. They rejoice in the same Saviour; and He who is *the sole and exclusive* medium of your approaches to the Father, is the source of their supreme and eternal felicity. "HIM THE FATHER HEARETH ALWAYS." You need no other advocate. His intercession is all-sufficient, and you are encouraged to rely upon its efficacy, without the intervention of any other medium. "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost THAT COME UNTO GOD BY HIM, SEEING HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM." (Heb. xiii. 15. Col. i. 19. Heb. vii. 25.)

LECTURE VII.

ON PURGATORY, AND THE DOCTRINE OF MERIT.

THE Scriptures are the only sources of certain information respecting a future and invisible world. A thousand vague and absurd conjectures on this awfully and interesting subject, were floating in the speculations and fancies of men, before "Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light by "the gospel;" and since that period, an unhallowed curiosity has often led presumptuous inquirers to "intrude into the things that are not yet seen." Revelation itself has its limits. Its discoveries are sufficient for all the purposes of "life and godliness," and furnish the basis of that hope which "maketh not ashamed;" but it is dangerous to pass beyond those limits; to overstep the boundaries which are placed around the sacred mount and attempt, to explore the unrevealed regions of futurity. Unless the silence as well as the voice of Scripture be regarded, we shall be continually liable to error and misconception.

The fact of a future state of existence, is known only by revelation. Philosophers have reasoned from analogy, and appealed to the ever restless activity of the human mind. They have argued from the wishes and fears and hopes of man; but no evidence has established their speculations, and

no certainty has been attained by their inquiries. The very knowledge they actually possessed, might be traced to the wandering streams of traditional information, derived from the source of revelation, which, as they became remote from their origin, either by distance of time or place, were contaminated by the inventions and reasonings of men. It is *written* revelation, which alone imparts any degree of certain and satisfactory knowledge respecting a future state; and the moment we desert that guide, we are abandoned to all the capricious and monstrous delusions of the human imagination.

As revelation alone supplies us with the certain knowledge of the fact of a future and unseen world, its sacred records alone can inform us respecting the misery or the happiness of that world. It is clear, that apart from revelation, we have no *data* by which to conduct our reasonings. Our sole object, therefore, is to ascertain *what saith the Scripture*. Its notices and assurances constitute our only source of information.

From this inspired volume, we learn that man is a compound being, possessing a body, composed of organised matter, and an immaterial and immortal spirit—that death is the dissolution of the body—that the soul or spirit exists in a state of consciousness, separate from the body—that those who die “in the Lord,” are immediately happy in being “present with the Lord”—that the wicked are immediately miserable—that the state intervening between the period of death and the resurrection, is not the final state of the righteous and the wicked—and that the happiness of the one and the misery of the other, will not be complete, till those who are in their graves hear “the voice of the Son of God, and come forth; “they who have done good to the resurrection of

" life ; and they who have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." On all that is said of the state of intervening between death and the resurrection, and of the final decisions of the last day, we do not meet with a single passage, which directly or by implication conveys the idea of *temporary punishment*, by which some, who are not wicked enough to be damned, are yet not righteous enough to be saved. We read of no *purgatorial process*, by means of future punishment, for preparing sinners for the enjoyment of heaven ; but on the contrary, the whole scope and tenor of revelation confirm the assertion, that though there are degrees of happiness and of misery corresponding with the diversified characters of men in the present state, there are only two states in the future world, and that the righteous and the wicked, the friends and the enemies of God, comprise all intelligent beings under the divine government.

The doctrine of the Roman Church, concerning *Purgatory* and *Prayers for the dead*, may be ascertained from the following propositions, extracted from "the Faith of Catholics."

" Catholics hold there is a *purgatory*, that is " to say, a place or state, where souls departing " this life, with remission of their sins as to the " guilt, or eternal pain, but yet liable to some " temporal punishment still remaining due ; or " not perfectly freed from the blemish of some " defects, which we call *venial sins*—are purged " before their admittance into heaven, where no " thing that is defiled can enter. We also believe " that such souls, so detained in purgatory, being " the living members of Christ Jesus, are relieved " by the prayers and suffrages of their fellow " members here on earth. But where this place " be ; of what nature or quality the pains be ;

" how long souls may be there detained ; in what manner the suffrages made in their behalf be applied, whether by way of satisfaction or intercession, &c. are questions superfluous and impertinent as to faith." (*Prop. xi. xii.* pp. 351, 352.)

i. On this explanation of the Roman Catholic doctrine, I remark in the first place, that it proceeds upon a most pernicious and unscriptural view of the nature and demerit of sin. The distinction between *venial* and *mortal* sins is altogether unsanctioned by the word of God, and is so ambiguous and discretionary that if it could be possibly admitted as correct in its principle, it would be invariably dangerous in its application. But the principle is totally inadmissible : the natural self-love of the human heart, the deceitfulness of sin, the actual diversity of circumstances in which persons are placed, and the ingenuity with which the mind is disposed to avail itself of these circumstances for the purposes of excuse and palliation, would all be combined in leading men to think their most flagrant transgressions were *venial*, if once this distinction were admitted. It is true, that there are sins of infirmity, and sins that indicate a settled and habitual alienation of the heart from God. But the man who is truly humble and of a contrite heart will not resort even to this distinction for the purposes of self-complacency and satisfaction. He will mourn over every instance of departure from the path of rectitude, whether in thought, in word or in deed : and will look upon no imperfection to be *venial*. The same law which condemns the act of sin, condemns every desire and volition and inclination, which might, either remotely or directly lead to the commission of it. "*The thought of foolishness is sin;*" and every sin, whatever may be its

comparative degree of guilt in relation to other sins, is a transgression of the law of God, and therefore exposes the offender to the divine displeasure. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." "Every *idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Jas. ii. 10. Matt. xii. 36.) The same rule is violated and the same authority despised, in the sins which they call venial, as in those which they denominate mortal; and the very disposition which would lead a man to consider any of his irregularities as of the former description, and to speak of them as such, may be justly regarded as a presumptive proof of an impenitent and unhumbled mind. It will then be inquired, What is the resource of the Christian under the consciousness of daily infirmities? The very same with that to which he is directed to repair as a penitent sinner under the conviction of the most awful and aggravated guilt.

ii. Hence, I observe, secondly, that the notion of a purgatorial process for the remission of venial sins, is altogether derogatory to the merit and sufficiency of the Saviour's satisfaction. The idea of our own sufferings making satisfaction in any sense for our offences, has already been adverted to, as grossly opposed to the explicit assertions of Scripture; and the purgatorial scheme has naturally arisen out of it. How can such a scheme be reconciled with such passages as these?—"He is able to save them *unto the uttermost*, that come unto God by him." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation." "THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON, CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN." (Heb. vii. 25. 1 John i. 7. ii. 1, 2.)

The last cited declaration is remarkably decisive on the point before us. It refers to the removal of guilt from the conscience, and of pollution from the heart. It directly asserts, not only a legal expiation, a sacrificial efficacy in the blood of Christ to atone for sin, but it describes its moral purification—its cleansing virtue. It cleanseth from *all* sin, whatever be its comparative enormity, its deeply rooted influence, or its accumulated guilt. And the deduction from this is incontrovertible, that no other sacrificial purgation is necessary. It is sufficient for all the purposes of the divine government; it satisfies the justice of God; it magnifies the law of God; it secures an honourable medium for the dispensation of mercy; and it purifies “the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.”

In the book of the revelation we have a sublime and interesting representation of the praises of the heavenly temple. “After this I beheld and “lo, a great multitude, which no man could “number of all nations and kindreds and people “and tongues, stood before the throne and before “the Lamb clothed with white robes, and palms “in their hands—and one of the elders answered “saying unto me—Whence came they? and I “said unto him, Sir, thou knowest; and he said “unto me—These are they who came out of great “tribulation, *and have washed their robes and “made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” (Rev. vii. 9, 14.) What is the theme of all their songs? “Unto him that loved us and washed us “from our sins, in his own blood—to him be “glory and dominion for ever!” In all these passages those sentiments are implied as well as expressed, which are altogether irreconcilable with the notion of purgatorial cleansing and satisfaction for venial offences by personal suffering.

It is impossible to harmonise these declarations of the sufficiency, the exclusiveness and the purifying efficacy of the blood of Christ, with the principle that any sins of the believer are not atoned for and remitted, till his own torments in purgatory have procured for him both absolution and purity.

iii. I observe, thirdly, that the notion of a purgatory is opposed to the numerous declarations of Scripture, respecting the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, and the immediate happiness of all who die in the faith and hope of the gospel. If we contemplate the promises of the everlasting covenant with respect to the people of God, we shall find the most encouraging and consolatory assurances. “I have blotted out thy transgressions as a thick cloud, and will not remember thy sins.” “I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sins no more.” “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” “All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven.” “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.” “He hath forgiven you—all trespasses,” &c. &c. These are a few specimens of the language of Scripture on this subject, in reference to all those who “repent and believe the gospel,” and who “obey the author of eternal salvation.” They are constantly described as *the pardoned, the justified, as those who shall never come into condemnation*, as having now access to the grace or favour in which they stand, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. But how can these representations be satisfactorily explained, if they are to suffer in a state of torment as the punishment for their sins, and in order to procure *satisfaction*? Is it just in God to demand *satisfaction*, when by his own declarations, full

and ample satisfaction has been given? Is it consistent with the wisdom, the faithfulness, the mercy of God, to inflict this, after the numerous assurances of pardon and remission?

But the sentiment is directly opposed to every scriptural representation of the immediate bliss of departed saints. "Blessed are the dead who die "in the Lord, FROM HENCEFORTH; yea, saith "the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, "and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13. This passage deserves our particular consideration. The sentiments it contains, are introduced with peculiar solemnity. An audible voice from heaven commands the Apostle to "write;" and the declaration thus formally and emphatically announced is confirmed, by the asseveration of the Holy Spirit—"Yea, saith the Spirit." And what is the truth thus brought before us in such circumstances of solemn and affecting interest? That those who die in the Lord are "*blessed from henceforth.*" It asserts not only their existence in a state of consciousness, and their future happiness, but their *immediate* felicity, commencing with the period of their departure. Nor is there any thing in the connection of the passage, or in the description of character to which this blessedness is appropriated, which intimates that it is confined to a particular class of Christians. The phraseology is of general application: "Here is "the patience of the saints; here are they that "keep the commandments of God and the faith "of Jesus"—"Blessed are the dead who die *in* "the Lord." These representations apply to all the faithful of every age; and the assurance of immediate felicity after the moment of dissolution is designed to support them under their various trials, to excite their hopes by the promised rewards of faith and patience, and to secure their

cheerful perseverance in all the paths of obedience and devotion. How well adapted are such assurances to promote these important ends; and how chilling and depressing the idea, that after the toils, anxieties and expectations of the present state, there is no rest for the people of God, till they have made satisfaction for their *venial* offences by their personal sufferings in the region of purgatory!

Other passages in the New Testament convey the same interesting sentiment, and assure us of the immediate happiness of all the faithful. The Apostle Paul had a “desire to depart and to be with Christ;” which, he adds—“*is far better.*” It may be said that the Apostle was peculiarly privileged, and could indulge that measure of hope with respect to his instant admission to heaven, which ordinary Christians are not authorised to indulge. To this I answer, that whatever the grace of God did for St. Paul, he was so humbly and penitently conscious of his own imperfections, (or what they call *venial sins*,) that he exclaimed, “Oh! wretched man that I am! “ who shall deliver me from the body of this “death!” And St. John has assured us, that—“if we say, that we have no sin we deceive our-“selves, and the truth is not in us.” If St. Paul thought it “better to depart and to be with Christ,” it was because he should then be delivered from the very being of sin, no more lament its influence, and be “for ever with the Lord.” But if a purgatorial punishment followed death, it was surely better to have remained a little longer on earth.

The same Apostle declares concerning the faithful, that when “absent from the body,” they are “present with the Lord;” and this he describes as their common privilege. (2 Cor. v. 6—8.) There

are, however, two passages, which are singularly inexplicable on the purgatorial principle. I refer, as the first instance, to the account of the rich man and Lazarus. It is said, “the beggar died, “and was carried by angels to Abraham’s bosom; “the rich man also died and was buried; and in “hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” (Luke xvi. 22, 23.) I am aware that this is a *parable*, and that unwarrantable inferences may be drawn from it; but though a parable, the principles essential to its natural and just explanation must be true, or it will be the medium of communicating erroneous sentiments. It must be assumed as a truth, that there is a state of conscious existence after death, or the whole structure of the parable is calculated to deceive. The rich man is represented as actually in the place of torment, at the time when his brethren were living on earth. It is further implied, that the entrance on these separate states of misery and happiness was *immediately* after death. Suppose that this is *not* the case, and the parabolic illustration is altogether built on an unfounded assumption, and cannot be consistently explained. It is also implied, that there is no intermediate state; for between Lazarus and the rich man, it is declared, that there is a “great gulph fixed”—an impassable chasm—an eternal separation! Whatever may be our construction of the various figurative terms in this parabolic illustration, we shall render it altogether void of meaning, unless these be considered as *implied truths*, the admission of which, can alone give it a rational and consistent explanation. I refer to it for the purpose of shewing, that there are only two states of existence immediately after death, and that the righteous and the wicked enter upon them, at the moment of their departure from the present world.

The other instance to which I would advert, is

—the Saviour's promise of an immediate entrance into Paradise, to the penitent thief just before he expired on the cross (Luke xxiii. 42, 43.) "And he said unto Jesus—Lord, remember me; when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me *in Paradise*." It would be natural to imagine on the purgatorial scheme, that if any man needed the salutary effect of its operation, it would be one brought to repentance at the very last extremity, and snatched as a "brand from the burning"—saved at the "eleventh hour!" Surely, in such circumstances, if there had been a process of purifying, by means of punishment after death, it would have been deemed requisite in a case of this nature. On the contrary, our Lord gave the dying penitent an assurance the most explicit and satisfactory; and described the happiness to which he should be *instantly admitted*, as the state of *Paradise*, the place to which the separate spirits of the godly are exalted in the unseen world, and the felicity of which is preparatory to the final glory to be conferred upon them, at the resurrection of their bodies. The parable and the fact are alike inexplicable on the principles of the Roman Church.

iv. I observe, fourthly, that the notion of purgatory is unsupported by the scriptural passages generally adduced by them on this subject. The first text cited by the authors of "the Faith of Catholics," is Matt. xii. 32. "Whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." From this they infer, that there are some sins which may be forgiven in the world to come, that are not forgiven in the present world. If this inference were just, it is singular that St. Mark and

St. Luke should have omitted the phrase on which so important a conclusion is supported. In the parallel passages in their writings, it is merely said, that the sin against the Holy Ghost *shall never be forgiven.* (Mark iii. 29. Luke xii. 10.) And this I conceive was all that our Lord intended by such an asseveration. The Jews, through a fond imagination of the final happiness of all the seed of Abraham, supposed that there were some sins, that had not been forgiven here, which would be expiated by death, and forgiven after it. It is highly probable, that to this prevailing opinion our Lord alluded, when he declared that the sin against the Holy Ghost should *never be forgiven.**

According to scripture phraseology, a thing is often said to be done, when it is *declared* to be done. In this sense, the day of judgment will declare or make manifest the forgiveness of sins, to all who have lived and died in the faith and hope of the gospel. On earth they were justified and absolved from the guilt of sin, for this is repeatedly asserted in the sacred volume, to be the present privilege of believers. But at the last day they will be publicly absolved from the guilt of sin, by the authoritative declaration of the supreme Judge, and acknowledged as the "blessed children of God." It was in reference to the procedure of this solemn period, that the Apostle Paul prayed on the behalf of Onesiphorus—"that "he might find mercy of the Lord in that day!"—It is evident by "the world to come," we are to understand, (if it refer not to the Christian economy as succeeding the Mosaic dispensation,) the

* There are several passages in their Rabbinical writings which clearly prove, that the phrase "neither in this world, nor the world to come," was a proverbial expression to denote that *a thing should never be.* See *Whitby, in loco.*

period which shall commence after the transactions of the day of judgment. That day is called the *last* day, because it will be the termination of the present state of things. But the period of purgatorial punishment, according to the Church of Rome, intervenes between the death of the sufferer and the last day, or the day of the resurrection; and therefore forgiveness "in the world to come," cannot mean forgiveness during the purgatorial period. It is also strange to call it *forgiveness*, when the individual has by his own sufferings, procured *satisfaction*. That may be to me forgiveness, which is procured by the satisfaction of another, especially if the satisfaction itself is provided by him whom I have offended; but it could not be said to be *forgiveness*, if I had endured the penalty and discharged the debt by my own personal sufferings. My release would be the effect of legal claim and not of pardoning mercy, and "**I**" should have whereof to glory."

The next passage is in 1 Cor. iii. 13—15. "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for "the day shall declare it,* because it shall be "revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every "man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work "abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall "receive a reward. If any man's work shall be "burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall "be saved, yet so as by fire."—In the connection of these words, the Apostle Paul sets forth under a most striking and appropriate emblem, the relation subsisting between the ministers of the gospel and the members of the visible Church. He re-

*The Vulgate from which all the vernacular translations of the New Testament in the Roman Church are taken, reads—"the day of the Lord," an interpolation supported only by some citations of the passage in the ancient Fathers.

presents the Church as a vineyard and all its ministers, whatever might be their comparative excellencies and diversified talents, as labourers, occupying various departments under the care of the great proprietor, and deriving all their success from his sovereign and efficacious influence. (1 Cor. iii. 6—9.) He then changes the figure and employs another series of illustrations. The Church is the “building of God ;” and ministers are employed in collecting and arranging materials for this building. Here, be it remembered, that there were at this time false teachers in Corinth, and a factious party interested in supporting them. This appears from various passages in both the epistles of this Church. The Apostle avails himself of the opportunity which this last figurative allusion gave him to point out the duties of faithful ministers, the characters of those whom they should admit to the privileges of Christian fellowship, the cautious discrimination they should manifest in the selection of their materials for the spiritual building, and the danger to which they would be exposed in the time of trial. Hence he describes himself as a “wise architect,” who had laid the foundation. The Church at Corinth was first established by his apostolic labours ; and others were appointed to carry on the building which he had begun. “Let every man take heed how he “buildeth thereon—now if any man build upon “this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones—“wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be “made manifest, for the day shall declare it, “because it shall be revealed by fire,” &c. x. 10—12.

I am aware that this passage is applied by some to the mixture of erroneous doctrines and human inventions with the pure principles and institutions of the gospel. But this I conceive is merely an

accommodation of the figure. The whole illustration refers, not to *sentiments* but to *characters*: and the “fire” describes, not the torment of hell, for before that is inflicted the trial of a man is over; nor can it refer to the fire of an imaginary purgatory, for that does not try a *man's works*, but according to the Church of Rome, it tries a *man's soul*; but it is an appropriate representation of *persecution* and its effect in proving whether those whom the ministers at Corinth admitted to the privileges of the Church were genuine or hypocritical professors—whether like “gold, silver, and precious stones,” they would stand the test, or like, “wood hay and stubble,” be consumed by the trial. That the *fire* refers to persecution appears from the use of the very same figure in the epistle of Peter; “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.” (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.) Those who built the “wood, hay, and stubble,” are said to suffer loss, though if themselves personally sincere, “they would be saved, yet so as by fire.” This refers to the loss in respect of future reward which ministers will suffer by the defection and apostacy of those nominally converted by their labours, or incautiously admitted by their sanction into the Christian Church. While the Apostle Paul gloried in some as his “joy and crown of rejoicing,” the Apostle John says to the children of the elect lady, whose characters it might be presumed, were not then established and matured—“look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” (2 Ep. v. 3.) For a man to be saved so as by fire, obviously means, that he is saved, with great difficulty. This mode of

speech occurs in other parts of the Scriptures. "Ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning." (Amos iv. 11.) "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."* (Jude v. 23.) Thus, I conceive this passage when explained by its connection, furnishes no support what ever to the notion of purgatorial punishment.

There is another passage in the first epistle of Peter iii. 18, 19, 20. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited on the days of Noah while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." On this citation, I remark, that if the "spirits in prison" mean souls detained in purgatory, how can the account given of these dis-

* "Some of the Fathers," says Dr. M'Knight, "perceiving that the Apostle in this passage spake not of doctrine but of persons, supposed that the fire which was to try every man's work, was the fire which is to happen at the day of judgment. And therefore, as the Apostle speaks of persons whose work was to be burnt, but themselves saved, they fancied that all men, the righteous, as well as the wicked, are to be burnt in the general conflagration; that the separation of the righteous from the wicked is thereby to be made; that the wicked are to be consumed; and that the righteous are to suffer, some more, some less, according to their character. The passages of the Fathers to this purpose, Burnet hath collected, *De Statu Mortuorum*, cap. vi. But the Romish clergy, perceiving that this doctrine, properly managed, might be made an inexhaustible source of wealth to their order, have represented this fire of purgatory as lighted up from the very beginning of the world, and have kept it burning ever since, and have assumed to themselves the power of detaining souls in that fire and of releasing them from it, according to their own pleasure; whereby they have drawn great sums of money from the ignorant and superstitious." *M'Knight, in loco.*

obedient antediluvians be reconciled with the assertion, that purgatory cleanses only from *venial sins*! According to the proposition before referred to, purgatory is intended to further the purification of those whose mortal sins are already remitted, and who are “ liable only to temporal punishment.” It was really a long period to suffer for “ defects, called venial sins;” and it was a very inexplicable judgment which condemned the whole world, with the exception of “ eight souls,” to destruction, by so tremendous an inundation, while all the while their sins deserved only the prison of purgatory! I need not remind you, how opposed to all this implication are the awful representations of antediluvian iniquity. “ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually: and it repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart!” (Gen. vi. 5, 6.) And yet these transgressors were sent not to hell, but to purgatory! If the Apostle meant that Christ actually visited the “ spirits in prison,” and preached to them, it is natural to suppose, it would be for the purpose of releasing them: but we are not informed of such a result; on the contrary, the passage implies, that they were still in the same state, when the Apostle wrote his epistle.

I confess that there is some difficulty in ascertaining the true interpretation of the Apostle’s meaning, and I am aware that it is variously explained by Protestant expositors. That it affords no support to the notion of purgatory is I think unquestionable: and the most natural sense, appears to be that which M’Knight and Doddridge have given of the passage. Christ was “ quickened” or made alive “ by that Spirit, by which

" he had preached in the days of Noah to the
" spirits now in prison." The Spirit that in-
spired the prophets is called in this epistle "the
Spirit of Christ which was in them." (Ch. i. 11.)
It was the same Spirit that made Noah "a
preacher of righteousness;" and of his operation
it was said—" My Spirit shall not always strive
" with man." (Gen. vi. 3.) " By attributing the
" preaching of the ancient prophets to Christ, the
" Apostle hath taught us, that from the beginning,
" the economy of man's redemption, hath been
" under the direction of Christ."*

v. It remains for me to observe, finally, that the doctrine of purgatory has been one of the most fertile sources of the corruption, intolerance, and priestly domination, by which the Church of Rome has been distinguished. To the doctrine of purgatory may be traced the indulgences, or special dispensations, which by a natural process, became at length commutations in the way of pecuniary acknowledgment, for the commission of sin. Purgatory, according to the Church of Rome, is a *prolongation* of the sufferings by which satisfaction is made for venial offences. That satisfaction is obtained either by temporal punishments in this world, or by the infliction of suffering in the world to come. But the temporal punishments of this world may be remitted by *purchasing* indulgences. It follows as a natural and necessary consequence, that by paying more than is requisite for a dispensation in this world, purgatorial sufferings may be alleviated, if not altogether prevented. Hence, the treasures by which the See of Rome has been enriched, in consequence of indulgences, procured at given ratios of expence, according to the scale of offend-

* M'Knight, in loco.

ces, requiring satisfaction; and hence the immense sums paid to the priesthood for the prevention or mitigation of purgatorial sufferings. To the priest belongs *the power of the keys*, and by this mysterious prerogative, he can open and shut the gates of purgatory when he pleases. The natural influence of such opinions, carefully preserved in the belief and feelings of the laity, must tend to exalt the power of the clergy, to invest them with almost supernatural authority; and to secure those habits of implicit and unqualified subjection which are at once the causes and the effects of ecclesiastical intolerance.

With the doctrine of purgatory, the Church of Rome connects prayers for the dead, and masses for the souls of those who are suffering in this intermediate region. Now if it could be supposed that there is such a process of purification by means of future punishment, and admitted for the sake of argument, that the Scriptures sanctioned this principle, where shall we find in the sacred volume the shadow of a warrant for the offering up of prayers and the performance of masses for the purposes of lessening or of terminating their sufferings? Where shall we find any support for the practice of *demanding money for the prayers and masses, and of proportioning the measure of relief to the degree of pecuniary compensation?*—“Wonder, O Heavens, and be astonished O earth,” at the infatuation which blinds the eyes of men, and prevents them from discerning the fanaticism and imposture of such deluding and miserable superstition! My friends, do not call this—declamation. I cannot resist the temptation of presenting to you a document which will tell more than a volume of elaborate reasoning on this subject. The following is an exact copy of a paper lately published in the City of Dublin;

and as I wish to give it publicity and circulation, that you may know what popery is—not merely in France, or Spain, or Italy, but in the British dominions, in *Ireland*—in *DUBLIN*—I shall give you the whole of this curious document, with the appropriate reflections of the author, from whose interesting publication I have extracted it. After these quotations you will feel perfectly satisfied on the subject of Purgatory. The paper referred to is entitled—

“ **PURGATORIAN SOCIETY**, instituted July 1st, “ 1813, and held in St. James’s Chapel, Dublin.” It is thus introduced—

“ *The members who compose the society of the Office for the Dead, commenced on the above day, at the said place, adopting the spirit and meaning of the above sacred text, (Maccabees xii. 56.) and wishing in conformity to the divine precepts of the Holy Catholic Church, to extend their charitable views beyond the grave, by relieving, as far as in them lies, the suffering souls in Purgatory, and inviting all tender hearted Catholics, who have a feeling sensibility of the duty they owe their departed parents, relations, and friends, who probably may stand more in need of their commiseration at present, than at any period of their lifetime, to assist in the charitable and pious purpose of shortening the duration of their sufferings by the most easy means imaginable, have agreed to, and adopted the following Rules:*

“ Rule 1. That the affairs of this institution shall be regulated by the Superior, Rectors, and six of the Members who compose the office for the dead, who shall attend on every Wednesday

" night, at half-past eight o'clock, throughout the
" year, at the above named place, or any other
" place which may be hereafter appointed, and
" there, with attention and devotion recite the
" office for the dead, agreeable to the intention
" that shall then be mentioned.

" Rule 2. That every well disposed Catholic,
" wishing to contribute to the relief of the suffer-
" ing souls in purgatory, shall pay one penny per
" week, which shall be appropriated to the pro-
" curing of masses to be offered up for the repose
" of the souls of the deceased parents, relations,
" and friends of all the subscribers to the institu-
" tion in particular, and the faithful departed in
" general.

" Rule 3. That on the first Monday of every
" month, a mass will be offered up in the Parish
" Chapel of St. James, at ten o'clock, for the
" spiritual and temporal welfare of the subscribers
" of this society.

" Rule 4. That the Superior, Rectors, and
" Council, shall continue in office for six calendar
" months, at the expiration of which time, candi-
" dates shall be nominated by the persons in
" office, who shall give due notice to the whole
" body of Members who compose the office for
" the dead, that they may punctually attend on
" the first Wednesday night in July, at half-past
" eight o'clock, and on the first Wednesday night
" in January, for the purpose of electing a Supe-
" rior, Rectors, and Council, to serve the ensu-
" ing six months, and so in succession.

" Rule 5. That each subscriber, on entering
" this society, do purchase a copy of these Rules,
" in order to defray the expences incurred by
" printing and other contingencies, and that the
" money arising from the weekly subscriptions

" shall be disposed of to the most necessitated
" clergymen, who shall be required to give re-
" ceipts for what they are paid.

" Rule 6. That the spiritual benefits of this
" institution shall be conferred in the following
" manner, viz. Each subscriber shall be entitled
" to an office at the time of their death, another
" at the expiration of a month, and one at the
" end of twelve months after their decease; also
" the benefit of masses which shall be procured
" to be offered, by the money arising from sub-
" scriptions, and which shall be extended to their
" parents, relations, and friends, in the following
" order, that is to say, their fathers, mothers,
" brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and if married,
" husbands, wives, and children, if they have any
" departed who lived to maturity.

" Rule 7. That every Member of the office
" for the dead, who serves the society in the ca-
" pacity of Superior, shall at the time of his death
" be entitled to three masses, to be offered for
" the repose of his soul, and also every member
" who serves the office of Rector, shall be en-
" titled to the benefit of two masses, and every
" subscriber without distinction, shall be entitled
" to the benefit of one mass, each, provided that
" such member or subscriber shall die a natural
" death, be six months a subscriber to the insti-
" tution, and be clear of all dues at the time of
" their departure, that care shall be taken by the
" surviving Superior and Rectors that such soul
" masses are punctually obtained, agreeable to
" the interest and meaning of this institution.

" Rule 8. That the Superior, Rectors, and
" Council, be empowered to make (as occasion
" may require,) such bye-laws as they shall think
" expedient, provided they do not interfere with
" the spirit of these Rules, the said bye-laws are

" to be laid before the body at large, for their
" approbation, and that four shall form a quorum
" on the council.

" Rule 9. That the Superior, shall, on every
" All-Souls'-Day, advance to the Parish Priest
" of James's-street Chapel, whatever sum is neces-
" sary for obtaining an insertion in the mortality
" list of the altar, the names of the parents, rela-
" tions and friends, of all the subscribers to this
" institution, to be recommended to the prayers of
" the congregation at every mass throughout the
" year.

" Subscriptions received and subscribers regis-
" tered at the chapel, on every Wednesday even-
" ing, from seven o'clock until nine, and in the
" school-room adjoining the chapel, on the first
" Sunday of February, May, August, and Novem-
" ber, being quarterly days, from ten o'clock un-
" til one.

" The books to be open for the inspection of
" subscribers."*

" Let the reader attend to this document. The
" society, he will observe, was instituted about
" two years ago. He will also observe, that it is
" countenanced by the clergy, at least those of
" St. James's, for it is held in the chapel. Let
" him then advert to the objects of it. They are
" to relieve suffering souls in purgatory, particu-
" larly those of the members of the society, when
" they shall go thither, and their relations who
" are already there, *by the most easy means ima-*
" *ginable.* And what are these means? Why

* This document is sold for three-pence, and the Printer is
J. Coyne, 74, Cook-street.

" paying a penny per week, as the easiest manner
" of raising money to procure masses. It is natu-
" ral to ask to whom this money is to go, which
" is expended in procuring masses? and the an-
" swer must be to the clergy, for they alone can
" give these masses. But besides the masses,
" there is mentioned in the 9th rule, a kind of
" subordinate help to the poor suffering souls,
" namely, insertion into the mortality list of the
" altar, which recommends them to the prayers
" of the congregation at every mass throughout
" the year, and this privilege also, is to be pur-
" chased of the parish priest of St. James's by the
" society.

" In what a light does this place the priest-
" hood? They believe, or at least they teach, that
" the friends of their flock are lying weltering in
" a lake of fire, from which they could deliver
" them, by saying masses for them, and recom-
" mending them to the prayers of the congrega-
" tion, and yet they will not say these masses,
" nor so recommend them, unless they be regu-
" larly paid for it. How can a man represent
" himself as such a monster, and yet hold up
" his head in civilised society! What! shall I
" believe that a single soul is suffering torments
" so dreadful—that it may continue to suffer them
" for ages—that I have the means in my power
" of relieving it—and yet that I shall coolly wait
" till I be paid, before I use these means! By
" what process of reasoning, can men be brought
" to believe, that this is the religion given to us
" for our salvation, by our kind and merciful
" Father in Heaven? By what arguments can
" the poor be convinced that a system of extor-
" tion, which gives so manifest a preference to
" the rich, can be that gospel which was to be
" preached peculiarly to the poor?

" But the reader may be most surprised to
" learn, that intelligent, upright, and conscientious
" individuals belong to this society, and conduct
" it. The very style of correctness with which
" the rules of it are composed and arranged—the
" care and foresight with which they are fenced
" and guarded, shew them to be the work of a
" man of judgment and prudence. The 5th rule
" provides that the money shall be disposed to
" the most necessitated clergy, who must give re-
" ceipts for what they are paid. The 6th marks
" precisely the order of consanguinity, in which
" the benefits of the society are to be extended,
" to *parents, relations, and friends*. The 7th gives
" encouragement to persons conducting the busi-
" ness of the society, and provides, that a sub-
" scribe, in order to obtain the benefit of it, must
" be of six months standing, must die a natural
" death, and must be clear of all dues at the time
" of his departure. The 9th rule seems to be in-
" tended to provide a kind of remuneration for
" the use of the chapel of St. James's, for it con-
" fines the money that is to be expended in pro-
" curing the prayers of congregations, to the priest
" of that parish. There is one point indeed,
" which seems to be left very vague and indeter-
" minate, namely, what precise effect the masses
" and prayers will have—whether they will relieve
" the souls from purgatory immediately, or whe-
" ther they will only shorten the duration of their
" sufferings. That they may be relieved at once
" from purgatory, that they may even be saved
" from going thither by certain processes, or that
" the precise relief obtained may be ascertained,
" is manifest from some of the indulgences quoted
" above: one of which provides, that he who
" complies with the terms of it shall never see
" purgatory, another, that if he were there, he

" shall be delivered from it, and another assures
" him of 90,000 years of respite. Now it would
" surely be satisfactory to those who subscribe to
" the society, if they knew precisely how much it
" would take to deliver each soul, or what is the
" exact diminution of suffering that each mass ef-
" fects; because, for ought I see, they may be pay-
" ing for the relief of those who are finally relieved,
" whereas, if they knew better what they were
" doing, they could save that money, and apply
" it to the relief of those who certainly need relief.
" I am afraid however that the clergy are too
" cunning to fix this matter with any great preci-
" sion, for nothing can be more profitable in this
" traffic than a little uncertainty. The bare pos-
" sibility of any ease being procured by a little
" money, for a dear friend lately deceased, must
" be an almost irresistible inducement to bestow
" it.

" Oh! awful delusion! that men with the light
" of the gospel shining on their eyeballs, should
" persuade themselves, that the God of heaven
" would actually sell to them, for money, relief
" from some necessary purgation, or some merited
" punishment! Look at this society again, and
" say, whether it might not with much greater
" propriety be denominated, A SOCIETY FOR
" THE RELIEF OF NECESSITOUS CLERGYMEN,
" than for the relief of souls in Purgatory. Sur-
"vey the whole transaction. A self-elected, in-
" corporated body declare, that they alone are
" commissioned by God, to teach what he chuses
" should be known, respecting eternity and the
" the world of spirits; and that the truth of what
" they teach, nay, and the reality of their com-
" mission, are not to be examined, further than
" they themselves chuse to submit them to ex-
" amination. Among many other doctrines equally

" profitable to themselves, they teach, that the
" souls even of those who listen to them implicitly,
" must go to a place of torment for a time, to
" be purified, before they enter on the infinite re-
" wards of their implicit faith and obedience: that
" they, by performing certain mystical ceremonies
" or incantations, which they call mass, can
" shorten this torturing purgation, or release the
" soul from it altogether; that they are warranted,
" nay, for ought I know, commanded by God, to
" exact money for performing these masses, which
" money is to be appropriated to their own use:
" and they countenance their people in forming
" societies to raise money, for the purpose of
" purchasing masses from the most necessitous
" among themselves. I appeal to any man of
" common discernment, if ever he met with a
" transaction, that bore fraud and imposture so
" legibly written on the face of it, as this does!
" And yet where can we look for deliverance to
" our poor fellow countrymen, from these tricks
" that are every day practised upon them, and for
" the sake of which, they are studiously kept in
" the most profound ignorance. No ray of light
" is permitted to reach them, and lest by any
" chance a passing gleam might shine upon them,
" they are taught to shut their eyes, and to be-
" lieve, that every one is their enemy, that would
" persuade them to look around them."*

On no subject in the whole range of the present controversy, is there such a want of precision and uniformity, as in the assertions and declarations

* *The Rev. James Carlile's "Examination of the arguments for the pre-eminence of the Roman Catholic Episcopacy," pp. 100—107.*

of Roman Catholic writers respecting *the merit of good works*. While some maintain a cautious and guarded phraseology, in which there may be little that is directly exceptionable, and seem to ascribe all the justification of a sinner to the merit of the Saviour's righteousness, others employ that kind of language that is perfectly irreconcilable with these principles. The very declarations of their canons and formularies are contradictory, and it is not therefore surprising that various and opposite opinions should be defended under the sanction of the same authority. It is sometimes asserted that the merits of Christ are sufficient and exclusively efficacious in procuring for us the favour of God; and at other times that the good works of Christians are "*truly deserving of an eternal reward.*" A scholastic distinction is often had recourse to, between the merit of *congruity* and the merit of *condignity*. By the former they mean a reward, not arising from the intrinsic desert of the action in itself, but because on some account or other, it is deemed fit and proper and *congruous* to reward it. By the latter they understand the actual worthiness of an action, by which in pure equity it is legally and justly entitled to reward. Some of their writers have contended that the virtuous actions of heathens, and sinners before they are justified, will be rewarded on the former ground, the merit of congruity; and others maintain that condign merit (or merit *ex condigno*) belongs only to the good actions of those who are justified.

The following propositions exhibit the most favourable aspect of Roman Catholic doctrine, on this subject; yet when minutely examined, accompanied by those explanations which have been given in the canons of the Council of Trent, it will be seen by what an artful intermixture of

contradictory principles, the effect of truth is counteracted and neutralised.

" i. When man has sinned, the remission or " pardon of sin is not attainable by him, otherwise " than in and by the merits of the sufferings and " death of Christ, who freely purchased our " ransom.

" ii. It is only through the same merits of Jesus " Christ, that the just man can obtain either an " increase of holiness in this life, or eternal hap- " piness in the next.

" iii. The good works of a just man, proceed- " ing from grace and charity are so far acceptable " to God, through his goodness and sacred pro- " mises, as to be truly deserving of an eternal re- " ward; 'God crowning his own gifts, when he " crowns the good works of his servants.' ”*

After some citations from the Scriptures, the following extracts from the decrees of the Council of Trent are introduced. " Though no man can " be just, but he to whom the merits of the pas- " sion of Christ are communicated ; yet this is " done in the justification of the sinner, when by " the merit of that passion, the charity (love) of " God is infused into the hearts of them that are " justified and dwells therein." — " Wherefore to " them who do well unto the end, eternal life " ought to be proposed, both as a grace which is " mercifully promised to them through Jesus " Christ, and as a recompense of their good works " and merits in virtue of this promise. And as " Jesus Christ perpetually sheds his influence on " them that are justified, which influence precedes, " and accompanies and follows all their good " works, and without which no works, can be " pleasing to God ; we must believe that nothing

* "Faith of Catholics." Prop. i. ii. iii. p. 2. &c.

“ is now wanting to render them deserving of eternal life, in reward of their good deeds, providing they depart this life in the grace of God.”
(Sess. vi. c. 7. 16.)

In addition to this extract from the decrees of the Council of Trent, I shall cite a few of their anathematising canons.

“ If any one shall assert, that justifying faith is nothing else than a trust in the divine mercy, remitting sin for Christ’s sake; or that it is faith alone by which we are justified, let him be accursed.

“ If any one say that the righteousness received (in justification) is not preserved and even increased before God by good works; and that these works are only fruits and signs of justification, not the cause of its being increased, let him be accursed !

“ If any one say, that the good works of a justified man are so the gifts of God, that they are not the meritorious good deeds of him who is justified; or that he who is justified, by the good works which are done by him through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, of whom he is a living member, does not truly deserve increase of grace, eternal life, and if he depart in grace, the obtaining of that eternal life and even an increase of glory—let him be accursed !” (Sess. vi. can. 12, 24, 32.)

Now putting together these contradictory assertions, you will perceive the true state of Romish doctrine on this important subject. The Scriptures are so explicit on the grounds and causes of justification, and attribute the forgiveness of sins, restoration to the divine favour, and eternal life, so exclusively to the meritorious obedience and atoning death of Jesus Christ, that it is impossible to preserve the semblance of apostolic principles,

without the occasional use of scriptural phraseology. There is unquestionably a considerable portion of truth in these extracts ; but that truth is paired down and explained away by declarations respecting the value and efficiency of good works. It seems, after all that Jesus Christ has done for us, he has only enabled us to merit the favour of God for ourselves ; so that his desert makes us deserving, and his merit consists in giving merit to our own obedience ! This is evidently the principle that pervades all their reasonings and explanations ; and hence the high terms in which they speak of the good works of some, *as actually more than the law of God obliged them to do.* Hence their notion of the satisfaction obtained by penance in this world, and by purgatory in the world to come. The very idea of satisfaction would never enter the minds of those who had not previously inflated themselves with high conceptions of the merit of their obedience. As to *supererogation*, it is an error that carries along with it, its own refutation. It cannot be taught as a possible, a practicable thing “ without arrogancy and anxiety ; for by this do men declare, that “ they do not only render unto God, as much as “ they are bound to do, but that they do more for “ his sake, than of bounden duty is required : “ whereas Christ saith plainly, ‘ when ye have “ done all that are commanded to you, say we are “ ‘ unprofitable servants.’ ”*

The reasoning which exposes the error of supererogation, applies to all their ideas of the merit of good works. If they were absolutely perfect, they could not in the proper sense of the term merit the bestowment of spiritual blessings, by their own intrinsic worth. And who will pro-

* Article XIIth, of the Church of England.

nounce them perfect? Who will dare to say that his obedience is commensurate with the demands of that law which is "exceeding broad!" Who will assert that in his holiest services there is no mixture of infirmity and imperfection? Who can lay his hand on his heart, in the review of any individual action or class of actions, and affirm, that all the motives and feelings and affections combined with those actions, as to the matter and manner of them have been in every respect right—right not only in the superficial estimation of his fellow creatures, but in the view of the heart-searching and omniscient God? Would not the declaration be instantly revolting, on account of the pride and self-sufficiency which it would so clearly indicate? And yet all this must be said and thought, before a creature could presume to think his good works "truly deserving of an eternal reward!"

It is "most surely believed amongst us," that God has graciously promised to reward the good works of the righteous. This sentiment is explicitly revealed in the sacred volume. But in what way and on what principle are they rewarded? Is it asserted in any passage of the Scriptures that the obedience and devotion of the faithful *deserve* the reward which God has promised to confer? Such indeed is the constitution of the economy of grace, that "God is not unrighteous to forget the work and labour of love, shewn towards his name." Hence he will refer at the day of judgment to the actions of kindness and benevolence, performed on behalf of poor and afflicted saints, as indications of love to Christ himself, and as genuine proofs of the reality of their faith. He will condescend to acknowledge and reward, even a "cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the

name of a disciple." But these representations by no means convey the idea of meritorious retribution. On the contrary all the happiness of the future state is described as "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The principle from which all acceptable obedience proceeded, was implanted by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The opportunities of performing those actions were marked out in the arrangements of providence. The "strength to suffer, and the will to serve," were alike derived from his gracious influence. And, after all, such was the consciousness, the humbling and habitual consciousness of imperfection, that these very actions thus performed by the aids of divine grace, were contaminated by so much sin, that they could not have stood the piercing scrutiny of divine justice, nor have answered the spiritual requisitions of the divine law ! An Apostle, rich in ministerial qualifications, eminently successful in his sacred office, unimpeachable by any just accusation from his fellow creatures, after a life of suffering and toil and privation in the cause of his master, and distinguished by the highest measure of spiritual attainment ever possessed by any merely human being—such an Apostle exclaims—"I count all "things but loss for the excellency of the know-
ledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I
have suffered the loss of all things; and do
count them but dung, that I may win Christ
and be found in him, NOT HAVING MINE OWN
RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS OF THE LAW, BUT
THAT WHICH IS THROUGH THE FAITH OF
CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF
GOD BY FAITH." (Phil. iii. 8. 9.)

All the erroneous conceptions, prevailing in the Church of Rome, and in some other Churches

too,* respecting the merit of good works, and the nature of justification, may be traced to their ignorance of the extent and spirituality of the divine law, and their unscriptural views of the principle of moral obligation. If man is bound to do only what he is inclined to do ; if the extent of his moral ability or in other words, his disposition, be the measure of his obligations ; if the law of God is relaxed in its requirements and accommodated to the weakness of man ; and if this relaxation, by which a perfect obedience to the divine law is rendered much easier than it otherwise would have been, be the principal benefit we derive from the interposition of Jesus Christ —then it is not difficult to conceive of the merit of obedience, and the possibility of that obedience going even beyond the extent of legal requisitions, and thus contributing to the accumulation of a treasure out of which indulgences may be granted to some, and punishments remitted to others ! But if on the other hand, the law of God be as immutable as his throne ; if he cannot diminish or annul one iota of its obligations ; if the inability of the creature affect not for a moment the extent and force of those obligations : if God can sooner cease to be, than to require a holy, spiritual and perfect obedience to his law, and Satan himself

* “ It may save the trouble of a more ample exposition, to make the general remark that on the subject of the terms of acceptance with God, and the nature of justification, regeneration, grace, and sanctification, the doctrine of the Church of Rome (abstracting the ceremonial peculiarities) is *the very system*, which a living prelate of the English Church has with no small assuming and with most disgraceful ignorance of theology, laboured to make out, to be the doctrine of the Church of England ; in a book which he has been pleased to entitle, “ *a Refutation of Calvinism.* ” The possessor of that book may felicitate himself on having a very fair compendium of Roman Catholic Divinity.” Dr. Smith’s “ Reasons of the Protestant Religion.” p. 23.

is as much bound by that law *now*, as he was before his apostacy ; if Jesus Christ came to magnify the law and render it honourable ; and if no pardon can be dispensed to the guilty, no favour conferred upon the unworthy, but *through* and *on account* of his perfect and all-sufficient righteousness—then no good works, no obedience of the sinner, either in whole or in part, can constitute the basis of his acceptance in the sight of God—no legal merit can possibly attach to his good works, and that alone can be, and continue to be, the ground of his hope, which is perfectly adequate to all the demands of the law, on which the pure complacency of the Almighty can rest with unmixed satisfaction, and which is, “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

It is the glory of the gospel that it reveals the combination of mercy and of justice in the salvation of sinners ; and teaches us to glory ONLY in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to the statements of the sacred volume, our justification consists in being accounted righteous and treated as such, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ received by faith in the gospel testimony. Such is the plan of the Christian scheme of redemption, that *faith alone* is the constituted method of interest in the blessings, it proposes and makes known. “It is of faith that it might be of grace.’ But while faith is thus exclusive in the matter of our acceptance with God, it is at the same time the spring and principle of holy obedience. “True, it is,” says Archbishop Leighton, “that faith purifies and all graces flow from it; but in the work of justifying the sinner, it is alone and cannot admit of any mixture.” “It is a childish cavil,” affirms the judicious Hooker, “wherewith in the matter of justification, our adversaries do so greatly please themselves, exclaim-

ing that we tread all Christain virtues under our feet and require nothing in Christians but faith, because we teach that faith alone justifieth ; whereas by this speech we never meant to exclude either hope or charity from being always joined as inseparable handmates :—and to shew that faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ for justification, and Christ the only garment which covereth the shame of our defiled nature, hideth the imperfection of our works, preserveth us blameless in the sight of God ; *before whom otherwise the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable, yes to shut us out from the kingdom of heaven.*

My Christian friends, have you been convinced by the teaching of God's Spirit, from right views of the purity and extent of his law, that you are guilty creatures?—Have you, to use the emphatic and appropriate phraseology of scripture, “fled “for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before “you?—Have you obtained joy and peace in “believing,” and are you, “living by the faith of the Son of God?” Then you will hate sin and “abstain from all appearance of evil.” You will not “imprison the truth in unrighteousness;” you will abhor the thought of sinning, because grace abounds: but while you renounce all dependence on your holiest services, while you rely for acceptance in the sight of God, as little upon your duties as on your transgressions, and are conscious of innumerable infirmities, blended with all your motives and actions, you will rejoice to contemplate that obedience of the divine Saviour, which is perfect, and that “righteousness which endureth for ever.” You will be thankful for what the grace of God has done for you and enabled you to do: but it is not the testimony of conscience, however desirable as

an auxiliary support in some states of mind, and in some circumstances, which will give you relief and comfort in the prospect of eternity. With trembling diffidence and conscious apprehension, you will reflect on the contamination that has been mingled with your best obedience: and in the solemn anticipation of that day, when “every one of us shall give an account of himself to God,” instead of imagining that your services have been “truly deserving of an eternal reward,” instead of supposing that you have merited eternal glory by all your best actions combined, you hope individually to exclaim with gratitude and confidence, appealing to “him that sitteth on the throne”—

“ Since the dear hour, that brought me to thy foot
 “ And cut up all my follies, by the root,
 “ I never trusted, in an arm but thine,
 “ Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine.
 “ My prayers and alms, imperfect and defil’d,
 “ Were but the feeble efforts of a child;
 “ Howe’er performed, it was their brightest part
 “ That they proceeded from a grateful heart;
 “ Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
 “ Forgive their evil and accept their good.
 “ I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
 “ Is what it was—dependance upon thee:
 “ While struggling in the vale of tears below
 “ That never failed—nor shall it fail me now !”*

THIS IS THE RECORD THAT GOD HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH; BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!

* Cowper, Vol. I. *on Truth.*

LECTURE VIII.

ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY.

IT is the high boast of the advocates of the Roman Church, that she is immutable. They assert that her doctrines, institutions and government are apostolic; that while heresy is continually varying its aspects, and all its changes can be traced from their origin to their termination, the truth maintained by the Church of Rome, is in all respects the same with that which the primitive Christians received; and that the medium of its transmission, by the unbroken line of the priesthood, has preserved it, pure and incorruptible to the present day. According to these apologists it must follow, that the powers and prerogatives of the See of Rome are precisely what Jesus Christ conferred upon St. Peter; that the jurisdiction of bishops, is exactly conformed to primitive models; that the gradations of clerical rank obtained in the first Churches; and that the archetype of the existing Church of Rome is to be found amongst the archives of Christian antiquity.

But let us look at this ecclesiastical polity, on behalf of which, such high pretensions are set forth. Let us examine the principles, constitution and actual state of this venerable hierarchy,

thus distinguished, according to the statements of its advocates by its *antiquity*, its *apostolicity*, its *catholicity* and its *infallibility*. We know that nothing in the world is easier, than to make great pretensions; to employ phrases and terms of lofty sound and indefinite meaning: and to substitute assertion and assumption for argument and evidence. If any political party in the present day were to claim an exclusive right to the title of *constitutional*, the only way to disprove that claim, would be to analyse the principles of the party, and to bring them into actual comparison with the principles of the constitution. In such a case we should refer to the charter of our rights, and to the record of those transactions in the history of the country, when that charter was recognised, and confirmed, and explained by such acts of the legislature, as tended to illustrate its principles and point out their practical operation. If the party in question could refer only to the laws and enactments of some particular administration, if they never recurred to the original basis on which the structure of the political system rests, and were disposed to exercise implicit faith in the alleged purity of those who happened to be in power, thus confounding the acts of an administration with the principles of the constitution, whatever might be their violation of its requisitions, should we hesitate to pronounce them *unconstitutional*? Should we not at once, disallow their claims and expose the fallacy of their pretensions? Thus, I conceive it becomes us to reason and to act, in our present inquiry. The Roman Catholics pronounce their hierarchy or system of ecclesiastical government to be *apostolic* and *exclusively apostolic*. Now to shew the fallacy of this claim, I shall endeavour to prove—that the constitution and government of

the Roman hierarchy are unsupported by the principles and practices of those Churches of which we have an account in the New Testament—that the earliest records of Christian antiquity are against their claim—that their Church-polity attained its present character and form, by merely secular means, and is in its essential principles, a secular system—and that the hierarchy of Rome exhibits a minute accomplishment of the prophecies respecting the anti-christian power.

I. I shall attempt to shew, in the first place, that the *constitution and government of the Roman hierarchy are unsupported by the principles and practices of those Churches of which we have an account in the New Testament*. Let us undeavour to ascertain these principles.

“ My kingdom ” said the insulted Messiah, at the bar of Pontius Pilate, “ is not of this world.” Such was the “ good confession,” in which he asserted the divine origin, the spiritual nature, and the heavenly tendency of that religious institution, which he came to establish amongst men. The kingdoms of this world are necessarily secular in their character. In general, they originate in conquest, and are supported by power. Policy and force are essential to their preservation. The authority of legislation and government is maintained, by appealing to the principle of fear ; and all the tangible possessions of man, his liberty, his property, and his life, are endangered by the violation of that authority. In the multiplied arrangements by which the order of the social system is preserved, we find an invariable regard to what is conceived to be requisite in order to secure reverence and subjection. The rights of justice are supported by the sword, and the sanction of her authority is the blood of the trans-

gessor. Obedience is enforced, by temporal rewards, and resistance is punished by temporal penanlties.

The means of support and defence in the kingdoms of this world are altogether secular. "If my kingdom were of this world," said our Lord, "then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." He who awed by the majesty of his presence the band of soldiers sent to apprehend him, and made them "fall to the ground," could have easily inspired all his disciples with the requisite qualities of heroism and military courage. He who controlled the waves of the Galilean lake and so often delivered himself from the rage of his most inveterate foes, could with the utmost facility have stilled the "tumult of the people," when they were gathered together against him and his cause; and have literally verified the prediction that "one should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." He could have made his disciples into the commanders of his forces, and as "the captain of the Lord's host" have subjugated the world. But force and coercion were in direct opposition to the genius of his religion. Hence the Apostle Paul declares, "Though we walk in the flesh, (i. e. are human beings like others) we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." (2 Cor. x. 3, 4.) Here the very principle of secular power, is most explicitly disclaimed; and it ought to be assumed as a maxim of unchanging authority in the polity of a Scriptural Church, that to support and propagate the religion of Christ, by secular force and coercive

measures, is opposed to the fundamental law of that religion, and condemned by HIM, who said—"My kingdom is not of this world."

The primitive Churches, under the care of the Apostles, were formed on this pure and spiritual principle. They were *voluntary* societies of persons who had been previously Jews or Pagans, but who had "received the truth as it is in Jesus." The bond of their union, was the love of Christ; the rule of their conduct—the law of Christ, as explained and enforced by their inspired instructors, and those who acted under their direction; the standard of their faith, was the revealed will of Christ ascertained through the same medium; and the object of their association was the promotion of the glory of Christ in their personal holiness, the gradual extention of their cause, and their zealous co operation in "the work of faith and labour of love." We have many interesting portraitures of primitive Christianity in the records of the New Testament, and especially in the Acts of the Apostles. "They continued stedfastly in "the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in "breaking of bread and in prayers." "The mul-
"titude of them that believed were of one heart
"and of one soul; neither said any that ought
"of the things which he possessed was his own;
"but they had all things common. And with
"great power gave the Apostles witness of the
"resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace
"was upon them all."

The authority of the Apostles was peculiar and exclusive: but the nature of their office required a frequent change of residence, and therefore local instructors were appointed in the various stations where they introduced the gospel. These instructors consisted of those who were most eminently qualified by their gifts and graces, to edify

the Churches to which they belonged. Some time generally elapsed between the first institution of a society and its complete organisation with respect to office-bearers : and to effect this object, *evangelists* were appointed to assist the Apostles, to labour in the newly formed Churches under their direction, and to "set in order the things that were wanting." The Apostles and Evangelists appear to have frequently travelled for the purpose of "ordaining elders in every city," where Christian societies were formed, and thus making permanent provision for their spiritual interests. They taught the people to choose for themselves their local instructors, and then set them apart to the office by prayer and the imposition of hands.

These stationary instructors are described by a great variety of names in the New Testament. They are called *Presbyters* or *Elders*, probably because at first, those persons would be selected for the office, whose age and experience best qualified them for discharging its duties. They are designated by the terms—*rulers*, *guides*, *pastors* or *shepherds*, *bishops* or *overseers*: and it is an unquestionable fact that these designations are indiscriminately applied to the same identical office, and are only different representations of its character and functions.* It was the great design of this office, to "build up the saints on their most holy faith," to "edify the body of Christ," and to "turn sinners from darkness to light, and the power of Satan to God." It was a spiritual office, instituted for spiritual purposes, and for which, those only were fully qualified, who were under the habitual influence of a spiritual religion.

* This assertion is unanswerably supported by Dr. Campbell in his "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History." Vol. I. p. 125, &c.

And how were the first Churches constituted? On the simplest and most intelligible principles. They were united together on the basis of mutual love to the truth, and to one another for the truth's sake. The credible evidence of sincerity in the profession of faith, was the ground of their admission to the privileges of Christian fellowship; the continuance of that evidence, secured the continuance of those privileges. It was the great object of apostolic and pastoral instruction to preserve them in the right way; and for this end, the sacred writings abound in directions on every personal and relative obligation. The Churches thus formed possessed *rights* which were invariably recognized by the Apostles, while they exercised over them an authority, that resulted from their peculiar and exclusive character. In the election of the "seven men of honest report," to manage the temporal affairs of the Church at Jerusalem, the Apostles left the business to the society; and they were commanded to "look out among themselves" for them. When the Apostles ordained elders they collected the suffrages of the people. When the Corinthians had suffered the discipline of their Church to become relaxed, *they* were ordered to "put away from them the wicked person." And in cases of offence between brethren, our Lord directed the offended party after the preliminary attempts at private reconciliation had failed, to "tell it to the Church," the individual society to which the parties belonged, as their final reference in the business.

The character of the primitive Churches may be best ascertained by an attentive perusal of the New Testament. There we see what pastors were required to be—what duties they were to discharge—what principles and sentiments they were to inculcate—and what obligations they were to

enjoin. But where do we find, in the authentic documents of sacred history, and the canonical epistles, any thing like the *hierarchy of Rome*? Where is the model and the precedent of papal power, of episcopal jurisdiction, of clerical offices, of a spiritual court, issuing its decrees, and calling in the assistance of the civil magistrate to despoil men of their property, their liberty, and their lives? According to the constitution of the Roman hierarchy, the clergy are every thing, and the people are nothing. Acts and statutes, and canons without number, have been passed to secure the prerogatives of the one, while the rights of the other have been altogether disregarded. A primitive Apostle said—"we have no dominion over your faith;" a modern bishop claims by divine authority implicit and unresisting subjection. An apostolic assembly decreed the abolition of Jewish ceremonies; and when some of the converts after all these enactments, very unwarrantably attempted to continue their obligation, the Apostles, dissuaded—reasoned—expostulated—and in case of pertinacious opposition to their authority wished those to be "cut off who troubled them." There the business ended, and the separated party had no further communion with the faithful. But a council whether provincial or general of the Church of Rome, in those countries where the secular power is in alliance with them, is not satisfied with the infliction of spiritual censures; but instantly proceeds in cases of disobedience, to proscription—banishment—confiscation of property, and in innumerable instances, to capital punishment. These outrages are committed by the civil power, under the direction and instigation of an ecclesiastical tribunal. A primitive bishop was the pastor, or one of the pastors of a single congregation. Hence, we read of the

"Church at Philippi with its *bishops* and deacons;" and of the elders of the Church at Ephesus being called, its *bishops* or *overseers*. (Phil. i. 1. Acts xx. 17. 28.) Thus limited were the powers and jurisdiction of an ancient see. But a modern diocese extends to a province; and a population of hundreds of thousands, may be under the government of a single bishop!

So far are the advocates of the Roman Catholic hierarchy from thinking that the New Testament supports their system, that, as I have before shewn, it is one of their principal objects to prove, that the New Testament possesses no ultimate authority on subjects of this nature, and that the practice of *the Church*, is at once the reason and the rule of their conduct. It is obvious, that if an appeal to the writings of the Apostles were to decide any question at issue between us, respecting their ecclesiastical constitution, the appeal would be fatal to their cause. Let any impartial, unbiassed reader, study with attention the New Testament, and after repeated perusal, attempt to delineate the apostolic constitution of Christian churches. Let him ascertain on what principles they were formed, the end of their formation, their rights and privileges, their independent and separate jurisdiction, with respect to the interference of one church with another, their *total* ignorance of a national or provincial church,* the officers by whom they were governed; and the nature and extent of their ministerial powers—let him notice the uniform recognition of the authority of each individual church, in all the writings of the Apostles; the absence of every thing like secular force and compulsion; and the spirit of mild and heavenly benevolence pervading all their canons—and

* See the first Lecture, pp. 14—17.

he will contemplate in these features of primitive Christianity, a direct opposition to the policy and government of the Church of Rome. He will exclaim, “*Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?*”

In the New Testament I can find nothing that looks like a *hierarchy*, or a government exercised by an incorporation of priests over their lay brethren. I find a number of men acting as the representatives of Jesus Christ, and supporting their high claims by “signs of apostleship;” but I cannot find one trace of *successors* to these men. Like the miracles they wrought, they were essential to the proof of the divinity of the gospel, but no longer requisite when that proof could be committed to historic record, and appealed to in future ages as the confirmation of their instructions. I find these holy men giving directions for the permanent continuance of their religion, and distinctly specifying the offices and ordinances which were to perpetuate the Christian economy. But I can meet with nothing that bears the slightest resemblance to the papal hierarchy—no canon for the election of a Pope, no evidence of the most remote and incidental nature, that such an office ever existed, or was designed to exist. Much less do I find of cardinals—archbishops—metropolitans—primates—deans, &c. &c. &c.

“——— eremites and friars
“White, black and grey, with all their trumpery.”

Truly, I must resort to other sources of information; and on these subjects, acknowledge the insufficiency of Scripture, for the rational support of such a system.*

* I trust it will not be thought a violation of candour, if as a Protestant Dissenter, I avow my conviction, that the same objections apply to the principle of *diocesan episcopacy* in general,

It is a favourite argument in vindication of the papal hierarchy, that it bears an analogy to the constitution of the Jewish Church. According to this idea, the High Priest of the Mosaic economy is succeeded by the supreme Pontiff of the Christian dispensation; and the various orders of the

as well as the Romish hierarchy in particular: and were I a member of our national establishment I should never attempt to vindicate such a form of Church-polity from Scripture. The pretension of a *jus divinum*, a divine right, as its basis, appears to me, as gross a fiction as the divine right of any civil existing constitution; and it must be confessed, that some of the ablest of modern Episcopalianists are too prudent to rest its vindication on this visionary principle. They resort to *expediency* and *the usage of the Church* in the ages succeeding the Apostles, and in thus managing the argument they are wise; for it would be difficult to find a particle of *written* apostolic tradition to support it.

The Rev. Thomas Scott, an Episcopalian expositor of great ability and impartiality, has the following remarks on Phil. i. 1.
 " Hence we learn that the distinction between bishops and presbyters was not then generally established; but that the pastors of the Church were distinguished from the deacons who managed the secular matters and the charities of the Church. Much labour and learning have indeed been employed to set aside this conclusion: but with little success, even by the allowance of decided Episcopalianists." And in his *Notes on Acts xx. 17.* "it must be allowed, that *bishops* and *presbyters* were not distinct orders of ministers in the Church at that time." He afterwards states it as his opinion that "*neither episcopacy, nor any other species of Church government can be proved from Scripture, to be exclusively of divine authority.*" On the same principle he asserts in his *Notes on 1 Tim. v. 21, 22.* that we "can by no means infer the *divine right* of episcopacy, "from the authority exercised by Timothy, Titus and other Evangelists; though he conceives it probable, that it was "very early found *expedient* and *conducive to peace*, to have a "stated presiding inspector of approved wisdom and piety." How far the institution of *diocesan* episcopacy has accomplished these ends and been conducive to the interests of Christianity, is a question, on which of course, different opinions will be formed. That its adoption tended to prepare the way for the papal usurpation, and for all the consequences of clerical domination, is, I think, most indubitably proved by the records of ecclesiastical history.

clergy are the priests and the levites! It is easy for an ingenious fancy to trace analogies on any subject, and substitute them for proofs; but on the point before us, the great question is—whether Jesus Christ and his Apostles *intended* that the Jewish economy should furnish a model for the arrangements and discipline of the Christian Church? If this be assumed, where, I ask, is the evidence of this intention? Why are the pastors of the Christian Church never termed *priests* or *sacrificers*? Why is their office never represented as *sacerdotal*? Why is Jesus Christ ALONE, “the High Priest of our profession,” and the priesthood under the law, considered as symbolical, not of the ministers in particular, but of the whole collective body of the Christian Church in general? Why is it, that we find no remote or incidental allusions to this resemblance? Why is nothing recorded about degrees of office—the extent of episcopal jurisdiction—the adaptation of the system to the different orders of civil society—the nature of the apostolic succession, on which depends the validity of sacramental rites? Why is there such an inexplicable silence pervading the oracles of inspiration on these “*weighty* matters?” An ancient Jew was at no loss, when disputing on questions of ritual and discipline, and could immediately say, “thus it is written.” But the divine instructor of the Christian economy, promised by the Saviour himself, as the guide and monitor of the Apostles, who was to “lead them into all truth,” never appears to have included these points within the range of his communications. Jesus Christ was seen of his disciples “forty days” after his resurrection, during which he “spake to them of the things “pertaining to the kingdom of God;” but it does not appear that they received any information on these subjects. If they had, it is natural to sup-

pose that we should find some traces of it in their writings. In those epistles, in which the episcopal or pastoral character is minutely pourtrayed, there would surely have been some reference to points of this nature. There is no way of accounting for this total omission of the subject, but by concluding, that neither the Spirit of truth nor the "great Teacher" himself, instructed the disciples about the constitution of a hierarchy; and that prelatical jurisdiction and papal authority were the unauthorised inventions of a future age.

II. But I remark, in the second place, *that the earliest records of Christian antiquity are against the claims of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.* In this assertion, I particularly allude to the Fathers of the first century, and to those who immediately succeeded them. If an examination of the fragments of this remote antiquity lead us to perceive no traces of a hierarchy, and present at the same time various points of contrast between the Church of Rome and the first Christian Churches, then the constitution of the Roman Church is not so ancient as its advocates pretend. According to the principle of the papal hierarchy, as set forth by one of its defenders, it was "Christ's intention and "appointment, that his followers should be collected into one sacred empire, subjected to the "government of St Peter and his successors, and "divided, like the kingdoms of this world, into "several provinces; that in consequence thereof, "St. Peter fixed his seat of ecclesiastical government at *Rome*, but afterwards to alleviate the "burthen of his office, divided the Church into "three greater provinces, according to the division "of the world at that time, and appointed a person to preside in each, who was dignified with "the title of *Patriarch*; that the *European Patriarch* resided at *Rome*, the *Asiatic* at *Antioch*,

" and the *African* at *Alexandria*; that the bishops " of each province, among whom also there were " various ranks, were to reverence the authority " of their respective patriarchs, and that both pa- " triarchs and bishops were to be passively subject " to the supreme dominion of the Roman Pon- " tiff."* Such is the bold declaration of an ardent and sanguine assertor of papal claims. But while it is so manifestly destitute of proof from Scripture, as to require no attempt at confutation on that ground, it presents a truly accurate account of *what ought to have been, and what must have been, the intention of Christ and the actual conduct of St. Peter, on the principle that the Roman hierarchy is either of divine or apostolic origin*. I should be insulting your understandings to prove that this was not the intention of Christ, and that St. Peter did NOT act upon these alleged principles; and I shall shew you that the actual proceedings of the Christian Church during the first, and part of the second century, do not furnish a vestige of proof in support of these claims.

It appears, first, that in the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles, there were no distinctions of rank and office among Christian ministers; but the pastors of churches were indiscriminately termed *bishops* and *presbyters*. There are two very ancient testimonies which I shall cite from Dr. Campbell, one of them is from the most respectable remains of Christian antiquity, next to the inspired writings. The piece I allude to, is the first epistle of *Clemens Romanus* to the *Corinthians*, as it is commonly styled, but as it styles itself—"the epistle of the Church of God at Rome,

* See *Leon Allatius*, "De perpetua Consensu Eccles. Orient: et Occident." Lib. i. c. ii. cited by Dr. Maclaine in his Notes on *Mosheim*. Vol. I. p. 78.

to the Church of God at Corinth." It is the same Clement whom Paul calls "his fellow-labourer." (Phil. iv. 3.) In this epistle Clement informs us, that "the Apostles having preached the gospel in "countries and towns, constituted the first fruits "of their ministry, whom they approved by the "spirit—*bishops* and *deacons* of those who should "believe." And in order to satisfy us that he did not use these words in a vague manner for church officers in general, but as expressive of all the distinct orders that were established by them in the Church, he adds, "nor was this a new "device inasmuch as bishops and deacons had "been pointed out many ages before; for thus "says the Scripture—'I will constitute their "‘bishops in righteousness, and their deacons “in faith.’" The passage quoted, is the last clause of the 17th verse of the 60th chapter of Isaiah. "Whether this venerable ancient," observes Dr. C. "has given a just translation, or made a proper application of this prediction, is not the point in question.* It is enough, that it evinces what his notion was of the established ministers then in the Church. And if (as no critic ever questioned, and as his own argument necessarily requires,) he means the same by bishops with those who, in the acts are called *presbyters* or *elders*, whom the Apostles ordained in every Church, and whom Clement in other parts of this epistle also calls *elders*, namely, the ordinary teachers, it would seem strange that the bishop properly so called, the principal officer of all, should be the only one in his account, of whom the Holy Spirit in sacred writ had given no

* Had Dr. Campbell adverted to the septuagint he would have found one part of the passage rendered according to the version of Clement. καὶ δώσω—τὸς επισκόπους σὺ εν δικαιοσύνῃ. This however does not prove the correctness of the application.

previous intimation. Nay, do not the words of this father manifestly imply, *that any other office in the Church than the two he had mentioned, might be justly styled*—“*a new device?*” If the above account given by Clement is not to be considered as an enumeration, I know not what to call it. If two were actually all the orders then in the Church, could he have introduced the mention of them, by telling us he was about to publish a list or catalogue, or even to make an enumeration of the ecclesiastical degrees? Is this the way of prefacing the mention of so small a number as two? It is this writer’s express design to acquaint us what the Apostles did for accommodating the several churches they planted, in pastors and assistants. And can we suppose he would have omitted the chief point of all, namely, that they supplied every church with a prelate, ruler or head, if any one had really been entitled to this distinction?”

“The other testimony I shall produce is that of *Polycarp*, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John, and must certainly have written his epistle to the Philippians, a considerable time before the middle of the second century. He also takes notice of *two* orders of ministers in the church enjoining the people, chap. v. to be subject to their presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ. He could go no higher for a similitude; nor could he decently have gone so high, had he known of a higher order in the Church. Not a syllable of the *bishop*, (as a distinct and superior office,) who in less than a hundred and fifty years after would have been the principal, if not the only person to whom their subjection would have been enjoined by any Christian writer. Let it be observed further, that though in chap. v. he lays down the duties and qualifications of deacons,

and in chap. vi. those of presbyters, wherein every thing befitting judges and governors is included, and through the whole epistle those of the people, there is no mention of what is proper in the character and conduct of a bishop.—It is evident that Polycarp knew of no Christian minister superior to the presbyters. If the bishop was of a different order, and yet included in the term, he has been as little observant of accuracy in the distinction of the names as of propriety and decency in his injunctions on this head.”*

In the next place, it is unquestionable, that for a long period after the office of bishops became distinct from that of presbyters, the episcopacy was *not diocesan*, but *congregational* and *parochial*. Its jurisdiction was confined to a single church, and was exercised over those who had formerly been considered as co-pastors. The churches formed in the principal towns and cities had a plurality of pastors. This is evident from the testimony of Scripture respecting the Churches at Philippi and Ephesus. Each church had its bishops or elders. In the natural progress of human affairs, the senior presbyter, or the individual first elected and ordained to the pastoral office, would from various causes be regarded with peculiar deference and respect. He would obtain precedence not on the ground of a distinct and superior office, but because his standing in the Church, or his distinguished talents and zeal in the defence of the common cause, would be considered as entitling him to this precedence. Such distinctions are inseparable from the operations and arrangements of all voluntary societies, and will invariably obtain to a greater or less de-

* Dr. Campbell's Lectures on Eccl. Hist. Vol. I. pp. 134, &c. See APPENDIX. NOTE T.

gree, unless there can be secured what has never been yet secured, an absolute equality in all the circumstances out of which distinctions arise. It would be natural for the preservation of order at the public meetings of the whole Church with its "bishops and deacons," to appoint a president or chairman; and who in general so proper to fill the chair as the senior pastor, or the individual most distinguished by his services and his success, in the cause of truth? Remember too, that pre-eminent distinction was attained only by active and laborious exertion, and at the expence of much personal suffering, and would invariably render the possessor of such honour more obnoxious to the enemies of the Church. All the while there would be no superiority of rank, no higher order of authority in the pastoral jurisdiction. He would only be *primus inter pares*, the first man amongst his equals, and dependent for that priority, on the confidence and esteem of his brethren.

It is not improbable, that this was the state of things at the time when the epistles of the Apocalypse were addressed to the seven Asiatic Churches. The "angel" or "messenger" of the Church was perhaps the chairman or president by whom all public documents and acts of the Church were officially signed, and to whom communications affecting the interests of the Church were addressed. This might arise from the obvious principle which regulates the proceedings of modern societies, and in which no distinction is involved, in the least degree inconsistent with the most perfect equality of right and power. It requires little ingenuity to trace the process by which in the course of time these circumstances would lead to the formation of the episcopal office: and it is remarkable, that some of the first

terms applied to the office, when it acquired a separate and distinct character, confirm this supposition respecting its origin. The bishop was called *president* and *chairman*, and the *possessor of the first seat*; (*πρωτοκαθεδρος*) and the presbyters were described as those who possessed the second seat, (*οι εκ δευτερου θρονος.*) When these distinctions were introduced, they were considered distinctions of degree, not of order. This is unanswerably proved by *Lord King* in his “Enquiry into the constitution of the primitive Church.” Though an episcopalian, he asserts, that the concurrent testimony of the early fathers has established the “equality of presbyters with bishops.” “A bishop preached, baptised, and confirmed; and so did a presbyter. A bishop excommunicated, absolved, and ordained; so did a presbyter. Whatever a bishop did, the same did a presbyter; the particular acts of their office were the same; the only difference between them was in degree, but this proves, that there was none at all in order.”*

This is not the place for entering into an inquiry concerning the origin and progress of episcopal power. It is sufficient for my present purpose, if it appear that the episcopacy of the first and second centuries was materially different from the episcopacy of the Church of Rome. Now there is no fact more clearly and satisfactorily proved than this—that the bishops of whom we have any account, in the earliest records of the Church, were invariably *the bishops of one congregation*. Their episcopal jurisdiction was confined within *the limits of a single parish*, and beyond those limits they had no official power. On this point the testimony of history is uniform and explicit. “The ancient dioceses,” says *Lord King*, “are

* King’s “Enquiry,” &c. ch. iv. §10.

never said to contain *Churches*, in the plural, but only a Church, in the singular. So they say, *the Church of the Corinthians, the Church of Smyrna, &c.* as for the word *diocese*, by which the bishop's flock, is now usually expressed, I do not remember that ever it is used in this sense by any of the ancients. But there is another word, still retained by us, by which they frequently denominated the bishop's cure, and that is *parish*.—In Eusebius, the word is so applied in several hundred places. It is usual there to read of the bishops of the *parish* of Alexandria, of the *parish* of Ephesus, &c. This learned Episcopalian proceeds to prove by the most satisfactory collation of ancient testimonies, that the diocese of the bishops after the introduction of parochial episcopacy, never exceeded the bounds of a modern parish. The people of a diocese met together every Lord's Day for divine service. There was only one altar, or communion table for the Eucharist, in each diocese.* The sacrament of baptism was generally administered by the bishops alone, within their respective diocesses; and all the people of a diocese were convened, when Church discipline was administered, when a new bishop was elected, or ordained, and when any business respecting the Church was to be transacted. But these periodical and occasional meetings of all the diocese or parish could not have been held, if there had been any resemblance in the ancient episcopal jurisdiction, to what afterwards obtained, and still obtains in the Church of Rome.

I observe, in the next place, that the power of the laity, as distinct from the clergy, was invariably recognised in the constitution and government

* Ἐν θυσιασηριον ὡς εἰς ἐπισκοπός. “There is but one altar, as there is one bishop.” *Ignat. Epist. ad Philad.*

of the ancient Churches. Here apostolic precedent is decisive and unquestionable. When Judas "by transgression fell," Matthias and Barsabas were selected by the suffrages of the hundred and twenty disciples, as eligible for the vacant office. Both were *nominated* by the body of the disciples, and they determined to appeal to the decision of the lot, in order to ascertain which of the two should succeed the apostate.* When the deacons were chosen to superintend the secular affairs of the Church at Jerusalem, it was the command of the Apostles—"look ye out from among yourselves," &c. and the elders ordained by Barnabas and Paul, were ordained by the suffrages or the lifting up of the hands of the people. There appears to have been an invariable appeal to the people and a distinct recognition of their rights, in the service of apostolic ordination. Most explicit testimonies of the early fathers, prove that the principle of popular election was acted upon in succeeding times. Cyprian informs us that *Sabinus* was chosen bishop of Emerita *by the suffrage of all the brotherhood* (*de universæ fraternitatis suffragio.*) It was the custom throughout all Africa for the bishop to be chosen in the presence of the people: and Eusebius states that *Fabian* was elected the bishop of Rome "by all the "brethren who were assembled together in one "place for that purpose." (*Euseb. lib. 6. cap. 28.*) Cyprian, in an epistle to his flock, when he was in a state of exile, expressly states it as his con-

* It is, however, the opinion of Mosheim, that after both were nominated, Matthias was chosen by the *votes* of the assembly and not by the casting of a lot. With this agrees the opinion of Schleusner, who, after citing this passage, says that *κληροι* signifies the *tablets* on which the names of the candidates were written, after the previous nomination. So that according to this view of the case, Matthias had more votes than Barsabas.

stant practice, in all ordinations to consult the opinions of the people, and by their common advice to ascertain the character and work of those who were to be ordained. On the same principle we find the people always convened for affairs of discipline, and no decision formed without their knowledge and consent. There is another fact, worthy of peculiar attention in the present inquiry, and which proves that the constitution of the Churches in the first century was essentially different from that of the Roman hierarchy—each church, according to the earliest and most authentic records of that period, was a separate community, and independent of other churches with respect to the regulation of its interior concerns. “All the churches of the first century,” says Mosheim, “although closely connected by the bond of faith and love, and most ready mutually to perform every duty to one another, possessed nevertheless the right of jurisdiction and governed themselves without foreign assistance or any external authority. No where, either in the Scriptures, or in other records is any thing to be found, from which it can be understood, that some churches depended on the command and will of other churches, which were greater and more renowned; on the contrary, many things every where occur, which make it most evident, that they all had the same authority and were entirely similar and equal to one another. By no proof divine or human can it be, I do not say demonstrated, but so much as rendered probable, that in this first age, many churches entered into such an association with one another, as was almost in every province, afterwards formed among the churches, in consequence of which the bishops assembled at fixed seasons, made common laws and settled whatever questions and controversies of a reli-

gious nature might happen to arise. At length in the second century vestiges, some clearer, some more obscure may be traced, of that kind of association which produced councils; from which it seems to be manifest, that it was invented after the times of the Apostles; and that what is said about councils of the first century and the divine right of councils, rests merely on the custom and opinions of later times—that is on the most uncertain foundations.”*

It is freely admitted that at an early period, in the history of the Christian Church, exalted notions were entertained of clerical and especially of episcopal prerogatives. The superior influence attached to some stations above others, arising obviously from the greater wealth and population of cities and towns compared with rural charges, and the importance, which in the natural progress of things would belong to the bishops of the principal cities, such as Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome, gradually prepared the way for the formation of that tremendous system of ecclesiastical tyranny which afterwards began to afflict and desolate the world. The perpetual presidency vested in a single presbyter, at length advanced the office of presidency to a superiority of power and claim over the other presbyters in the same church. To use the language of modern times, the moderator or chairman became a bishop; the bishop was of course selected as the delegate and representative of his church at the provincial or national synod;† the individual chosen to preside

* *Mosheim, De Rebus, &c.* 48. The section is entitled—
“Omnes ecclesiæ primæ æctatis independentes.”

† “ Every church (in the second century) had its *haeresis* (*άἵρεσις*) or *opinion*; and it became of consequence to determine which was the right. To settle then the right *haeresis*, it was necessary for the churches to form a council of delegates; and who

at such synods would by degrees acquire a higher order of power and authority than the rest of his brethren; those who occupied the principal stations would be transformed, for the sake of distinction into metropolitans, primates, and patriarchs, according to the relative or assumed importance of the stations where they resided. This state of things would imperceptibly and actually lead, to the consequences which resulted from it, though it required time, experience and circumstances to form and complete the system which we now denominate the hierarchy of Rome. The equality of bishops for a considerable period after the process commenced its operation, was most zealously contended for, and the supremacy of any individual bishops most obstinately denied. Long after the jurisdiction of the episcopate began to extend itself, and to be more clearly distinguished from the office of presbyters, the bishops were still chosen by the presbyters and the people. The right of election however was at length alienated from the churches and vested in the civil power, or exercised by a higher order of ecclesiastical dignitaries. The source to which all these streams of corruption may be traced, was *a practical disregard to the authority and sufficiency of*

so proper to be elected as the bishops? In these assemblies delegated bishops perfected themselves in the art of wrangling, acquired a tone of authority, and practised airs of self-importance and dominion. Here too, for order's sake, a chairman must be appointed; and him time metamorphosed into an arch, or head-bishop, and him again into a metropolitan, and the metropolitan into a patriarch. Here then, Christians lost their liberties. Here, in time, delegates became first masters and then tyrants of the people. Here then, they determined their own *αἵρεσις* to be the right opinion, or as they called it, *orthodoxy*; and the opinions of others to be only mere opinions, unsupported by learned argument, and condemned to oblivion by the council." *Robinson's 'Ecclesiastical Researches.'*

Scripture. That holy standard was deserted, and the opinions and interpretations of men usurped its place. What one imagined ingenious, another adopted as expedient, and what at first was deemed only expedient, was at length enforced as right; and in the course of time the inventions of men acquired the sanction and the claims of a divine authority! But I proceed to observe,

III. That the Roman hierarchy attained its present character and form, by merely secular means, and is, in its essential principles, a secular system. And who for a moment can doubt this, that looks at it? An individual bishop, in defiance of all the principles and institutions of the New Testament, “lords it over the heritage of God”—styles himself, the Vicar of Christ—the Vicegerent of Heaven—the supreme Head of the Church—assumes the state and pomp and dignity of a monarch, holds a papal court, possesses temporal power and dominion, and employs the same means of support and resistance, by which other temporal monarchs acquire and extend their resources! In his ecclesiastical relations, his authority is pre-eminent. However his power may be limited in theory, it is in point of fact, uncontrolled. No general council can be convened without his sanction; no election to the highest dignities of the Church is valid without his consent and ratification; and no rule of procedure is binding without his injunction. The power of the priest is derived from the bishop, and the power of the bishop is derived from the pope; and the people are the vassals of both, made for their use, and subject to their sway. And on what principles are the interests of this hierarchy supported? By alliance with the kings and governments of this world—by systematic attempts to acquire exclusive privileges, and to form ecclesiastical monopolies—by making their reli-

gion wherever they can effect it, the *established* and *the only* religion—and by intolerance and persecution, in reference to all who presume to dissent from their claims, or dispute their authority. Let the history of past ages, and the transactions of the present, be appealed to, as the proofs of these assertions!

To trace the rise and progress of the papal power, would require a volume rather than a lecture. I shall however attempt a brief and condensed statement of some of the causes that operated in giving to the Bishop of Rome, the fatal ascendancy which he has for ages possessed, and which he still exercises over an immense proportion of the nominally Christian world. The causes are marked by their complication and variety, and were partly of a moral nature, and partly the result of accidental occurrences.

It is in the *first place*, unquestionable, that in the third century and previous to the establishment of Christianity by Constantine as the religion of the Roman Empire, the general state of the Christian Church was awfully corrupt and depraved. Times of persecution were favourable to the development and proof of individual piety; but the numerous instances of defection and apostacy were awful indications of the hypocrisy and insincerity that had prevailed during the intervals of rest and prosperity. A state of ecclesiastical government had been gradually introduced of a very different complexion from the Apostolic order. Clerical offices had been greatly multiplied; distinctions tending only to foster pride and vain-glory had been created; unscriptural importance was attached to sacramental rites; and the power of the priesthood was rapidly approaching the summit of its usurpations. In a treatise of Cyprian on Declensions, (or, *concerning the lapsed,*) we have the following melancholy portraiture of

the lax and degenerate state of the Christian profession. " Long peace had corrupted *the discipline* " *divinely revealed to us.*—Each was bent on im- " proving his patrimony, and had forgotton *what* " *believers had done under the Apostles and what* " *they ought always to do.* They were brooding " over the arts of amassing wealth : the pastors " and the deacons, each forgot their duty ; works " of mercy were neglected and discipline was at " the lowest ebb. Luxury and effeminacy prevail- " ed ; meretricious arts in dress were cultivated ; " fraud and deceit were practised among brethren. "—Christians could unite themselves in matrimony " with unbelievers ; could swear not only without " reverence, but without veracity.—Many bishops " neglecting the peculiar duties of their stations, " gave themselves up to secular pursuits. They " deserted their places of residence and their " flocks. They travelled through distant provin- " ces in quest of pleasure and gain, gave no assist- " ance to their needy brethren ; but were insatiable " in their thirst of money. They possessed estates " by fraud and multiplied usury."

This is not the account of a heretic, a sectarian and schismatical opposer of ecclesiastical claims ; but the testimony of the Bishop of Carthage—the eloquent and inflexible Cyprian. And it proves that in the estimation of Cyprian *the neglect of apostolic institutions* was the primary origin of declension and corruption in the Christian Church. It proves further, that Cyprian conceived these apostolic injunctions to be of permanent and universal obligation : and it would not be difficult to support another conclusion from this passage —that such a state of things was the natural result of that system of Church polity which rendered ecclesiastical offices, by their number, their revenues, and their influence, objects of ambitious

desire to the unprincipled and the avaricious. Had the independence, the simplicity and the discipline of the primitive Churches been retained, it would have been morally impossible for those declensions to have taken place, which this passage so strikingly delineates. If the principles laid down by the first teachers of Christianity had been inflexibly adhered to, it cannot be imagined, that as soon as Constantine ascended the imperial throne he would have attached all the sanctions and authorities of civil power to the Christian cause, and have enforced it by rewards and penalties. Whatever some ill-judged and aspiring men might have wished, the great majority of the Churches would have instantly protested against the measure of an ecclesiastical establishment incorporated by imperial charter, closely allied to the state, and rendered an essential part of its future constitution. They would have been thankful for the protection and security they enjoyed: and the facilities afforded by the favourable dispositions of the emperor, for the universal diffusion of Christian principles would have excited their gratitude to HIM, "by whom kings reign and princes decree justice." But they would have "lifted up their voice with one accord" against an alliance of their religion with the civil polity of the empire. If they had been *as a body*, sufficiently alive to the necessity of preserving the purity and simplicity of the gospel, they would have deprecated a measure, which, without the gift of prophecy, might have been denounced as pregnant with most injurious consequences to the liberty and holiness of the Christian Church.

These observations lead me to remark, secondly, that the establishment of Christianity by Constantine directly prepared the way for papal tyranny and ecclesiastical domination. Soon after

his reported conversion to Christianity, he and his colleague Licinius issued an edict, highly favourable to the interests of religion, and founded on principles which, had they been acted upon in his future proceedings, would have prevented much evil to the Church and the world. By that primary edict, every subject was authorised to profess his religion, whatever it might be, without molestation. It restored to the Christians the places of worship which had been taken from them during the preceding persecution, and all the property they had lost. But it conferred no exclusive privileges; it led to no interference with the consciences and religion of his subjects; and was founded on the rational principle of toleration.

This state of things did not long continue. Other edicts succeeded of a far different complexion. Imperial authority was employed to *enforce by temporal penalties* the observance of Christian institutions; and the emperor on the death of his colleague, assumed the sole right of governing the Church. To this assumption the bishops of that day submitted without the slightest resistance. It is easy to conceive that the transition from a state of persecution to the enjoyment of rest and security, would powerfully conduce to their acquiescence with all the arrangements of an imperial court, so strongly disposed to protect and favour them. But had the Churches retained the purity of apostolic principles, they would have solemnly protested against this interference. They would have allowed no prospect of immediate advantage to have concealed from their view, the certain consequences involved in the principle of such proceedings. They would have been anxious to secure the complete and permanent independence of the Church, with respect to all its ecclesiastical affairs and regulations.

For some time after the emperor commenced this ecclesiastical jurisdiction, no visible alterations took place in the polity and government of the Church. Changes however, of the most important nature were gradually effected. The rights and privileges of the clergy became matters of imperial regulation. The disputes of churches and bishops were determined by his authority. Councils were convened at his pleasure, and he presided *as supreme head of the Church*. He actually assumed the title of *bishop** and *regulator* of the external affairs of the Church, while he confined the jurisdiction of bishops and councils to matters of religious controversy and forms of worship, &c.

It soon appeared good to the emperor and those ecclesiastics by whose ascendancy and advice he was governed, to abridge and finally destroy the right of popular election. The people and the presbyters lost their power; and the bishops became by these innovations, immediately dependent on the court and subservient to the interests of the sovereign. Such measures naturally extended the boundaries of episcopal power, and raised it to a higher elevation, while they diminished its responsibility and secured its independence. "The first step," says Mosheim, "was, an entire exclusion of the people from all part in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs; and afterwards they by degrees, divested even the presbyters of their ancient privileges and their primitive authority, that they might have no importunate protesters to control their ambition or oppose their proceedings; and principally, that they might either engross to themselves, or distribute as they thought proper, the possession and revenues of the Church. Hence it came to pass, that at the conclusion of the fourth

* Eusebius, Vita Constant.: Lib. iv. C. 24.

century, there remained no more than a mere shadow of the ancient government of the Church. The privileges which had belonged to the presbyters and people were usurped by the bishops; and the rights which had been formerly vested in the universal Church, were transferred to the emperors, and to the subordinate officers and magistrates.”*

The interest displayed by the emperor in the affairs of the Church, and the favour conferred upon those who acquired his confidence and regard, soon rendered the profession of religion, the high way to preferment. The civil dignities and splendid emoluments attached to the higher order of ecclesiastical offices made them objects of attraction, and greatly multiplied the number of the ambitious, the designing and the hypocritical. These sources of corruption became still more polluting and infectious, when, in consequence of the alliance between church and state, the government of the former was modelled according to the principles of the latter. This change introduced new degrees of rank. The bishops were considered as prefects or magistrates; the metropolitans as ecclesiastical proconsuls or presidents of provinces; and the primates, as prætorian prefects, acting as the representatives of the emperor and governing the imperial provinces. Thus the nominally Christian Church became a “kingdom of this world;” and its ministers, an army of spiritual janizaries, depending upon the sovereign for their support; and its institutions subservient to the accomplishment of arbitrary designs. Thus the “mystery of iniquity” that had been “hitherto let,” or hindered by the power of Pagan Rome, and which began to discover its fatal operation, even under

* Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. Cent. iv. Chap. II. 283.

the watchful eye of apostolic inspection, in the ambitious spirit that was occasionally displaying itself among those who wished to “lord it over God’s heritage,” now attained facilities for the full completion of its designs. The secular authority with which ecclesiastical governors were invested, and which arose primarily and exclusively from the establishment of Christianity, by Constantine, was the immediate origin of that dreadful influence by which the Church of Rome became “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS —AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

The moment *force* is employed to promote the cause of Christianity, that moment, its essential principles are violated. In this respect it is distinct from all wordly systems; and when by the abandonment of its own maxims, it approximates to such systems in the methods of its support and extension, it is no longer the Christianity of the New Testament. It is the province of the Christian monarch, or of those who possess the supreme authority in civil government, to protect the rights of conscience, and to secure every possible facility for the legitimate and peaceful exercise of those rights, by means that are not incompatible with the general safety of the state, and the interests of virtue and morality. But to employ the agency of force in the suppression of heresy and the support of truth—to take cognisance of heterodox opinions, when the conduct of those who maintain them, does not violate the order and peace of the community—to attach exclusive immunities to a particular sect or modification of religious principles, while the advocates of other principles are involved in odium and suffering and civil penalties—is a direct violation of all the rights which enter in the constitution of a well-ordered government, and an unwarrantable reflection on Christianity it-

self, as if it needed the arm of secular power to support it. Such an interference on the part of the civil magistrate implies the virtual claim of infallibility on behalf of the power that employs it. It supposes that he is authoritatively fitted to pronounce what is right and what is wrong in matters of religion. But where is the proof of that authority, either in the Christian revelation, or in the nature of the office, with which the individual is invested? If this power is to be exercised, what are its limits? and who are to judge on the subject? If once we admit the *right* of the civil magistrate to interfere with religion, by exclusive rewards on the one hand, and the infliction of any measure of temporal penalties on the other, we instantly recognise a principle which justifies every exercise of that right, and binds on the necks and consciences of subjects, the yoke of unlimited and unresisting subjection. The right to legislate in religion, necessarily involves in it the right to enforce such acts of legislation; and if they may be justly enforced, non-subjection becomes a crime. On these principles, our religion must be continually varying, and adapting itself to the different governments under which we may happen to live. It is needless to say, that the Christian revelation has never recognised such a right. The Saviour solemnly assured his enemies that his kingdom was "not of this world;" and he clearly defined the extent and limits of obedience to the secular power by the injunction—"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's." It is impossible for human authority to exercise a legitimate control over the conscience in matters of religion. Because opinions cannot, they *ought not* to be subjected to the authority of the law: actions and not sentiments should be guided by its interference;

crimes and not errors should be restrained by its penalties.

"Men have been very long" (says a most acute and judicious writer to whose opinions I have frequently referred,) "in discovering, and even yet seem scarcely to have discovered, that true religion is of too delicate a nature to be compelled by the coarse implements of human authority and worldly sanctions. Let the law of the land restrain vice and injustice of every kind, as ruinous to the peace and order of society, for this is its proper province; but let it not tamper with religion, by attempting to force its exercises and duties. These unless they be free-will offerings are nothing; they are worse. By such an unnatural alliance and ill-judged aid, hypocrisy and superstition may indeed be greatly promoted, but genuine piety never fails to suffer."*

But it will be inquired, in what manner, the secular establishment of Christianity by Constantine, ultimately promoted the supremacy of the Roman pontiff, and the general ascendancy of the Roman hierarchy? In answer to this question, I shall advert to two facts, well known to those who are acquainted with the history of the Roman Empire. One is—the influence arising from the very locality of *Rome*, and which extended, and by the aid of most powerful associations, still extends itself to every thing remotely or directly connected with it. The other fact to which I allude, is the transferring the seat of government from Rome to Byzantium, which combined with other causes tended to accelerate the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and secured an amazing accession of civil and political power to the See of Rome. We all feel, to this day, the in-

* Dr. Campbell's Lectures on Eccl. Hist., Vol. I. Lect. 3. p. 73.

describable fascination which invests the name of *Rome*. Its antiquity, its grandeur, its statesmen and heroes, its poets and orators, its painters and sculptors, its intimate connection with the history of science, the progress of philosophy and the civilization of the world, its classical and its religious associations, all unite to impart transcendent attraction to the city of Rome. The bishop of Rome had availed himself of these sources of influence, long before Constantine ascended the throne; and though his supremacy was often contested, his political importance was generally felt through the Christian world. Independently of the accidental circumstances which gave such interest to Rome, its dignity as the metropolis of the world was of itself sufficient to account for the early superiority of its episcopate. Of course the secular establishment of Christianity would naturally operate to increase this source of influence, and contribute innumerable streams to the swelling tide of ecclesiastical corruption.

When the emperor made Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople, the metropolis of the Empire, the bishop of that city became invested with patriarchal dignity; and it might have been imagined that he would have risen to higher influence in the Church, than the bishop of Rome. Far different however was the final result of this imperial arrangement. Rome, still retained its fascination and its attractions, in spite of the new metropolis; and the absence of the emperor and the removal of his court served only to increase the power and splendour of the Roman bishop. Before that period, he was only “the *second* man in Rome;” but afterwards he became the first.* The

* See *Machiavel's History of Florence*, Book I. cited by B. Newton in his *Dissertations*. Vol. II. Diss. xxii. p. 121.

title of *Pope* or Father, which had been previously bestowed on some of the metropolitan and patriarchal prelates, was soon appropriated exclusively to the Roman See; and every year beheld new accessions of power and wealth to uphold the state and dignity of the papal court. In fifty years after the establishment of Christianity, the opulence of the Roman See, and the splendour in which the pontiff lived, were so conspicuous that St. Jerome informs us of a Pagan nobleman, *Prætextatus*, who, conversing familiarly with Pope *Damasus*, said to him—"make me but bishop of Rome, and I will turn Christian immediately."* It was already, a "kingdom of this world," and the "weapons of its warfare had become carnal!"

I remark, in the third place, *that the secular*

* "The extensive power and revenues of the bishop in the principal sees, (even in the fourth century) offered too potent a temptation to ambition and avarice for clerical integrity always to resist. Hence arose considerable contests for the attainment of vacant sees; and every artifice of flattery and dissimulation was occasionally practised to ensure the approbation of the multitude whose suffrages were then taken in the election of their ministers. One melancholy instance of clerical depravity, which took place in this century, may serve as a specimen of that departure from primitive virtue, which marked the conduct of considerable numbers. In the year 336, the vacant See of Rome, was by the greater part of the clergy and people conferred upon *Damasus*; and this choice was confirmed by his being regularly ordained by the bishops. The artful *Ursicinus* had however by various intrigues, obtained ordination to the See of Rome from some other bishops, and prepared to take possession of what he considered his right. This gave rise to a furious contest, in which both parties proceeded to blows, and even to bloodshed and murder," (According to the account of Ammianus Marcellinus, cited by Dr. Campbell, Vol. I. 395, a hundred and thirty people were massacred) "The banishment of *Ursicinus* was not sufficient to appease the tumult—and it was not till after several years, that *Damasus* obtained the peaceable possession of his See." *Gregory's 'History of the Christian Church.'* Vol. I. p. 166.

character of the Roman hierarchy appears in the systematic and refined policy, by which its power was at first acquired, and by which that power has been in all ages supported. To ascertain all the principles and maxims of the policy pursued by the court and the Church of Rome, since the reign of Constantine, would require a minuteness and a range of investigation altogether incompatible with the limits and design of these discourses. Any one, who is in the least degree, conversant with the history of the nominally Christian Church, or even the records of civil history, will possess sufficient proofs of this assertion. Such an inquirer will perceive no difference, between the methods by which the hierarchy of Rome has been formed and supported, and those employed in the promotion of any avowedly worldly system. The same lust of wealth and power, the same violation of integrity and principle when they are against the claims of interest, the same measures of coercion and force in the suppression of those who "oppose themselves," the same regard to outward pomp and dignity by which the minds of the common people may be awed into reverence and subjection, the same vices which generally distinguish the habits and manners of a civil court, the same intriguing, manœuvring, and contention in order to acquire places of emolument and honour—have ever displayed themselves in the administration of the Roman Church, in the prevailing characters of its pontiffs and principal dignitaries, and in the general system of its ecclesiastical government, which appear in the operations of any secular power, or the history of the kingdoms of this world. There may have been numerous examples of individual piety, but this affects not the general character of the system, nor the natural tendency of its essential principles.

As far as a survey of the history of their eccl-

siastical policy, can enable us to develope its leading objects, they appear to have been two-fold ; first, THE DOMINION OF THE CLERGY OVER THE PEOPLE, AND SECONDLY, THE SUBJECTION OF THE CLERGY TO THE POPE. These ends have been steadily and incessantly pursued in the plans and measures of the Roman Church. Hence the names and titles applied to the clergy in all their numerous gradations ; hence the adaptation of their rights and ceremonies to the religious worship obtaining amongst their Pagan ancestors ; hence the pious frauds and legendary tales, the lying wonders and holy wars, which have been devised and projected for the good of the Church ; and hence the interference of the Roman See, in the quarrels and feuds and contests carried on amongst the neighbouring states and kingdoms, by which his Holiness always contrived to secure his own interests, and to strengthen the resources of his spiritual empire. To the same principle we may ascribe the prohibition of marriage to the clergy, by which artful measure they are rendered a compact and efficient corporation, less liable to be affected by the opinions and influence of the laity—a more distinct and independent community, and of course more subservient to the ambitious designs of the Roman See. By matrimonial alliances, the ministers of religion are intermingled and connected with the mass of the people ; but by the practice of celibacy they become so insulated and remote in their feelings and interests, that the impulse communicated at the centre of the system, is instantly transmitted to all its extremities, and the circles of vibration are unbroken and complete. The constitution of religious orders, and the high eulogium pronounced on the duties of a useless and selfish retirement from the world, in consequence of which, thousands were formed into monks and nuns, who ought to have been the

"lights of the world," "and the salt of the earth," but who imagined that it was far more pleasing to the Deity, to be drones in society, chanting their matins and vespers, and spending their time in drowsy meditations, than occupying their various talents for the good of their fellow creatures, may be traced to the same refined and Machiavellian policy. Out of the same principle arose the veneration of hermits, and the senseless adoration of those, who inflicted on themselves corporeal austerties. All tended to exalt the prerogatives of the priesthood, to separate men from the interests and relations of social life, to increase the dependancies of the Church, and to establish the empire of ecclesiastical despotism over the consciences and understandings of mankind.

"Money answereth all things." So said the royal Proverbialist, and so seems to have thought his Holiness of Rome, in all ages. Amongst the ancient Romans, it was artfully contrived by the Pagan priests, that legacies and bequests should be made to their gods and goddesses, all of which, of course, went to those that waited on them. When the religion of the empire was changed, it soon became a prevailing custom, for dying persons, to leave rich and splendid bequests to the Church, or rather to the saints, male and female, who had dispossessed the divinities of the Pantheon and usurped the mortuary honours formerly bestowed on their Pagan predecessors! The riches that flowed through this channel into the pontifical horde, and the wealth conveyed to the principal sees, by the same means, will easily account for the sudden accession of dignity and splendour to the episcopal station, after the fatal alliance of Christianity with the secular government. At a future period, the disgraceful sale of indulgences was resorted to for the purpose of enriching the papal treasury,

and increasing the means of temporal aggrandisement to the Roman See.

The same general policy which dictated all these varied methods of extension and support, was the primary and immediate cause of *persecution*. When the church became secularised, and civil power was employed to secure its prosperity, then excommunication involved in it the loss of property and liberty, and frequently of life. The Church and the state were so connected and their interests so indentified, that heresy and schism, became as deadly crimes, as privy conspiracy and rebellion: and the unhappy delinquent was condemned by the one, and punished *for the good of his soul*, by the other. Thus armed with secular power, the nominal Church of Christ came “not to save men’s lives but to destroy them.” The term *militant* was no longer a figure of speech, and the professed followers of the “meek and lowly” Saviour, were transformed into furious and intolerant demons. This was emphatically the case, when, under the auspices of the See of Rome, the crusades commenced their desolating career, and for two centuries the Christians of the Western world, engaged in unholy wars to recover the land of Palestine from the dominion of the Turks. The frenzy of enthusiasm displayed with such infernal energy, against the disciples of Mahomet, afterwards turned itself upon the sects which deserted the papal communion: and the murders in the vallies of Piedmont, the scenes of massacre and blood exhibited in Paris on the fatal Bartholomew day, the flames of persecution lighted up in Smithfield, and all the tragic relations of sanguinary opposition to the first Protestant dissentients from the Roman hierarchy, are melancholy illustrations of its policy and its principles!

“In the eleventh century,” says Dr. Jortin,

"the execrable Hildebrand, called Gregory the seventh, subverted all the ancient privileges of kings and princes, of councils and bishops, of clergy and laity, and established the dominion of the Pope as King of kings and Lord of lords. This wretch had all the marks of antichrist upon him. In the twelfth century, so many things concurred to disgrace and corrupt Christianity, that scarcely can we find the slender traces of it remaining, *except amongst those who were called heretics.* Whosoever would not comply with the will of the popes were immediately persecuted and put to death, when it could be done. The priests and monks had so deluded the people that an incredible superstition supplied the place of religion. If any knave or lunatic, male or female, boasted of divine revelations, they were received as the oracles of God. The rulers of the Church took a mean advantage of the stupid bigotry of the people, to squeeze money out of them and enrich themselves. The popes and bishops got wealth by indulgences, and every religious order had tricks of its own, to carry on the pillaging trade. The scholastics turned Christianity into the art of quibbling and wrangling, and ran into the most intricate and perplexing logical and metaphysical trifles. In the following century, papal tyranny was at its height;—the hellish tribunal of the Inquisition was established, and burning heretics became the universal practice, being chiefly promoted by the ecclesiastics and the popes, who declared in formal terms, that no faith was to be kept with the heterodox, and no oaths binding upon that occasion. Thus tyrannical oppressions and false doctrines went hand in hand, and gathered strength till the whole papal system was compleated."*

* Dr. Jortin's Sermons and Charges. Vol. vii. p. 423—5.

These observations lead me to observe,

IV. That the hierarchy of Rome exhibits a minute accomplishment of the prophecies respecting the antichristian power. Whatever opposes the purity, simplicity, and spirituality of the gospel is, in its principle and tendency, antichristian ; but there is a specific form of opposition to the gospel of Christ, which is termed by way of eminence, *antichrist*, and of which we have several predictions in the epistles of Paul. I am aware that in the prophecies of Daniel and in the book of the Revelation there are distinct notices of the same corruption ; but the symbolical and highly figurative terms in which these notices are conveyed, and the unquestionable fact that many parts of them are yet unfulfilled, induce me to confine your attention to the more explicit and literal declarations of Scripture. In many parts of the apostolic writings there are references to an awful defection that should take place in the Christian Church ;* but in the second epistle to the Thessalonians we have a minute description of the rise, progress and termination of antichrist. I shall cite the whole passage. (2 Thess. ii. 1—12.) “ Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means : for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he

* 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. 2 Pet. ii. 1—3. Acts xx. 29, 30. 2 Cor. xi. 3. 13—15.

is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

It appears from this passage, that the Thessalonian believers had misunderstood some parts of the first epistle, which the Apostle had addressed to them; and had unwarrantably concluded that the final period of the world was approaching. To destroy this impression, St. Paul introduces the prediction of a series of awful events which should transpire before the consummation of all things. From this representation, it is evident that the evil predicted by the Apostle was to continue through a long period, for the "day of Christ" is not to commence, till the complete termination of this corruption. It is also evident, that this predicted corruption was to proceed from the internal state of the Church itself; it was to commence its destructive process from *within*, and to be preceded by "a falling away." In the next place, the Church is specified as the scene of its developement and operations—it was to be displayed "in the temple of God;" and arrogance, impiety, the assumption of divine honours and

prerogatives, and dreadful malignity and intolerance, were to be the characteristic features of this mysterious iniquity. Its progress and maturity were to be marked by imposture and deception; and “signs and lying wonders,” to be the means of promoting the “strong delusions” by which its fatal ascendancy should be acquired and maintained.

It is further evident from this account, that the Thessalonians had heard the Apostle state the same prediction, “while he was with them.” They were the frequent subjects of his discourses; and it is particularly worthy of observation, that he represents the Thessalonians, as well acquainted with the cause or causes which at that time prevented the Wicked one from being revealed: “Ye know what withholdeth—only he who now letteth, will let or hinder, until he be taken out of “the way.” There was an obvious propriety in the cautious and guarded manner of the Apostle’s allusion to the impediment in the way of this “man of sin,” if it were of a political nature; and if it were not, it is difficult to account for his reserve on the subject. “St. Jerome in his explanation of this passage says, that “Antichrist shall sit in the temple of God either at Jerusalem, as some think, or as we more truly judge, in the Church, shewing himself as if he were the Christ and the Son of God; he i. e. Paul, saith, unless the Roman Empire be first desolated, and anti-christ precede, Christ will not come. *And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time*, that is, ye know very well why antichrist doth not come at present. He doth not chuse to speak it out openly, that the Roman Empire will be destroyed, which they who govern think to be eternal. For if he had said openly and boldly, that antichrist would not come, till the Roman Empire was destroyed,

" he might have afforded a pretext to enemies for
" persecuting the Church."* The explanations of
Tertullian, Augustine, Cyril, and Chrysostom,
accord with Jerome: the latter especially, in a
homily on the text, asserts, that " when the Ro-
" man Empire shall be taken out of the way, then
" antichrist shall come; for as long as the dread of
" this empire shall remain, no one would attempt to
" substitute another in its place. But when that is
" overturned, he shall seize on the vacant empire,
" and attempt to seize the power both of God
" and men." " And who," we may exclaim with
bishop Newton, " hath seized on the vacant em-
" pire of Rome, and assumed the power both of
" God and man?" Who hath usurped the prerogatives
of royalty, overturned the laws of nations,
held kings and princes, as vassals at his feet, de-
posed monarchs from their thrones, and absolved
subjects from their allegiance? Who hath reigned
in the palace of the Cæsars, and, in the Christian
Church, been " worshipped as God," assuming
" names of blasphemy," claiming implicit and
universal subjection, and denouncing anathemas
upon all who have disputed his authority? Whose
power has been acquired and supported by fraud,
imposture and persecution, and what merely se-
cular government ever verified by its tyranny the
declarations of Scripture, and explained by its
acts the symbols of prophecy? To the See of
Rome, and to its corrupt and ascendant hierar-
chy, all impartial and unprejudiced readers of
the sacred volume will instantly refer, as their
practical exposition. It was the traditional interpretation
of this prediction of St. Paul, during
the first three centuries, that on the decline and
fall of the Roman Empire, the antichristian usur-
pation should commence; and where can we find

* Cited by Bishop Newton, in his Dissertations. Vol. II. p. 128.

its accomplishment but in the history of the Roman pontiffs? I am aware that there have been many attempts to apply this prophetic delineation of the man of sin to a far different series of events than those which have transpired under the papacy of Rome. Some have sought for its fulfilment, in the sect of the Gnostics; some in the personal character of one or other of the Roman emperors; some in the revolt of the Jews from the Roman government; and some, in the recent usurpation of the late emperor of France. But an attentive perusal of the sacred prediction will lead to many inquiries, for which these various and contending references, will furnish no adequate solution. The early indications of a tendency towards this mystery of iniquity in the days of the Apostles, the scene of its operations, the character of its assumptions and usurpations, the kind of homage with which this lawless power should be invested, and the pretension to miraculous attestations, which should be made for the purpose of extending its sway—these features of the “wicked one,” combined with other parts of sacred prophecy on the same subject, belong only to one system, meet only in one assemblage of facts:—that system, is the hierarchy of Rome, and those facts are the proofs of its ecclesiastical and secular domination, recorded in the history of its own intolerance.* It is not any *individual*

* “In the opinion of a bishop of Rome, Gregory the great, whosoever affected the title of *universal bishop*, was antichrist, or the fore-runner of antichrist. “I confidently affirm, that whosoever calleth himself universal bishop, or desireth so to be called, in the pride of his heart, he is the “fore-runner of antichrist,” (Book vi. Ep. 30.) When John the Bishop of Constantinople first usurped this title, Gregory made answer. “By this pride “of his, what else is signified but that the time of antichrist is “now at hand?” Again he says upon the same occasion—“the “King of pride approacheth and an army of priests is prepared.” (B. iv. Ep. 34.) When the papal doctrines and the papal auth-

pope, to whom these prophetic passages refer, but the ascendancy of the Roman See, gradually and at first imperceptibly acquired, exercised through a long series of ages, and destined at length to be destroyed by the power of the Lord Jesus. He shall “consume it by the spirit of his mouth,” the influence of his holy word, and “destroy it by the brightness of his rising,” at that period, when the millenial glory of the Church shall commence, and pure and undefiled religion shall be triumphant and universal.

I cannot close these cursory remarks without adverting to the instructions we may derive from this melancholy detail. It exhibits, in the first place, a striking confirmation of the truth of Christianity. Had there been no prophetic notices of the great defection and corruption which at an early period marked the Christian Church, it might have been objected that the gospel had perished, like the inventions of men; and because

rity prevailed over all, it was natural to think and expect, that the true notion of antichrist would be stifled, and that the doctors of the church would endeavour to give another turn and interpretation to the passage (2 Thes. ii. 1—12.) That night of ignorance was so thick and dark, that there was hardly here and there a single star to be seen in the whole hemisphere. But no sooner was there any glimmering or dawning of a reformation, than the true notion of antichrist, which had been so long suppressed, broke out again. As early as the year 1120, a treatise was published concerning antichrist, wherein the faithful are admonished, “that the great antichrist was long ago come, that it was in vain to expect any other, and that he was already advanced to full age.” (*Mede's Works*, B. iii. p. 721.) The Waldenses and Albigenses propagated the same opinions in the same century. That the Pope was antichrist, was the general doctrine of the first reformers every where. Here in England, it was advanced by Wickliffe, and was learnedly established by Bishop Jewel. It is no wonder that in the last Lateran council the Pope gave commandment to all preachers, that no man should presume to speak of the coming of antichrist.” *Bp. Newton's Dissertations*, Vol. II. p. 130.

it seemed no longer the care of providence, that the divinity of its origin was a gratuitous and unsupported assumption. But so far is the fact of its corruptions from invalidating its claims, that it strengthens and supports them. The first teachers of Christianity foretold these corruptions ; and the awful contrast between the primitive state of the Church, in the purity of its principles, the simplicity of its ritual, the benevolence of its spirit and moral excellence of its members, and the subsequent state of the Church under the darkness, intolerance, and oppression of the papal yoke, exhibits a minute accomplishment of sacred prophecy.

In the second place, the discussion illustrates the danger of neglecting the Scriptures, and departing from the practical acknowledgment of their sufficiency. This was the latent source of that prolific and wide spreading contagion, which infected the Church ; the germ of that luxuriance and verdure which extended its deadly shade to surrounding nations. Hence arose the ascendancy and independency of the clergy, the multiplication of offices in the Church, the introduction of unnumbered ceremonies, the substitution of outward forms for spiritual religion, and the various evils which prepared the way for the civil establishment of Christianity, and capacitated the Church for becoming first the ally, and then the engine of secular power. An inviolable regard to the directions of Scripture, and the sacred maxims of our divine Teacher and Lord, would have rendered it morally impossible for these innovations and evils to have prevailed in the Christian Church.

The detail which has now occupied your attention, should, in the last place, excite our gratitude to God for the liberty we enjoy, and the privilege, which no power on earth can justly take from us,

of worshipping God according to the dictates of our consciences. The characteristic feature of the “Man of Sin,” “the mystery of iniquity,” is the admission of FORCE in matters of religion; and whatever sect or denomination of Christians employs force and secular power in its support, so far approximates to the spirit of Popery, and identifies itself with the essential principle of the anti-christian system.

“ Let Cæsar’s dues be ever paid
 “ To Cæsar and his throne ;
 “ But consciences and souls were made
 “ To be the Lord’s alone.”*

* I cannot close this lecture, without introducing on this subject, the sentiments of the great and amiable FENELON. They exhibit a striking instance of a powerful mind, rising above all the littleness and sectarianism of the most intolerant communion, and daring, even under the meridian of civil and ecclesiastical despotism, to address the following “directions for the conscience of a king.”

“ Above all things never force your subjects to
 “ change their religion. No human power can
 “ invade the impenetrable recesses of the human
 “ heart. Force can never convince men; it can
 “ only make them hypocrites. When kings med-
 “ dle with religion, instead of protecting it, they
 “ place it in bondage. Allow to all legal tolera-
 “ tion, not in approving all as indifferent, but in
 “ suffering with forbearance, that which God
 “ suffers, and in endeavouring to reclaim men by
 “ mild persuasion.”†

Sur toute chose ne forcez jamais vos sujets à changer de religion. Nulle puissance humaine ne peut forcer le retranchement impénétrable de la liberté du cœur. La force ne peut jamais persuader les hommes; elle ne fait que des hypocrites. Quand les rois se mêlent de religion au lieu de la protégér, ils la mettent en servitude. Accordez à tous la tolérance civile, non en approuvant tout comme indifferent, mais en souffrant avec patience, tout ce que Dieu souffre, et en tâchant de ramener les hommes par un douce persuasion.—*Direction pour la conscience d’un Roi, par FENELON.*

LECTURE IX.

ON THE GENIUS AND TENDENCY OF THE PAPAL RELIGION.

THERE are two methods of ascertaining the tendencies of a principle, or class of principles: either by reasoning from the principles themselves, and stating their natural and legitimate operation: or by referring to the general temper and conduct of those who maintain them. It must be confessed, that there is considerable difficulty in the application of these tests. An opponent is in danger of selecting from the class in question, those which he may deem most obnoxious, and without sufficiently taking into account, the counteraction of other associated principles, he may ascribe to those which he has selected, the entire and exclusive formation of character. Hence he may attach moral consequences, which in point of fact were never practically drawn from them. On the other hand, the references to actual character, may proceed on so partial and limited a range of instances, that they may afford no characteristic specimen of the tendency of the controverted principles. The man may be better or worse than his creed. The circumstances in which he is placed, the effect of early culture, local connections and prevailing opinions—the operation of law, of manners, and of other systems of religion—may all unite in modifying and restraining the positive in-

fluence of his own principles, and bring out a far different result, from what might have been previously anticipated.

In order to an accurate conclusion on the subject of tendency, our reasonings beforehand should be proved to be natural and just; and we should consider how far the principles in question, are essential or accidental parts of the system; and ascertain the degree of importance attached to them by their abettors. Our references to character should clearly shew, that it is the moral effect of such principles; that it necessarily rises out of them; and that the induction is formed on an enlarged scale of observation. If for instance, I wished to prove the danger of sceptical opinions, by their practical tendencies, my reasonings would not be confuted by telling me, that some avowed infidels were honest and benevolent, sober and temperate. It would be enough for the argument, if I could shew that these qualities did *not* arise out of infidel principles; that they proceeded from considerations of interest, or were the effect of educational habits, which their subsequent scepticism had not been able to eradicate. If it could be made to appear, that the natural and uncounteracted influence of sceptical opinions was subversive of all personal and social virtue, and that the general effect on character was bad, so that vicious irregularities characterised the professors of infidelity, the reasonings in this case would be supported by the facts, and the facts would explain and illustrate the reasonings.

In ascertaining the genius and tendency of the papal religion, it must never be forgotten that there is a large portion of scriptural truth mingled with it, and that in numerous instances, its direct and positive influence is beneficially neutralised. This is particularly the case in our own country, where the rights of conscience are protected by

the authority of law; and the healing spirit of liberal principles counteracts the power of intolerance. If we would contemplate the genuine features of Popery, we must abstract from our consideration the ameliorating effects of knowledge and liberty; and look at it, as it appears in its native soil, and in its own element, where its power is unchecked and its influence is unmodified. Visit *Italy*, the seat and centre of the Catholic and Apostolic religion. See the Vicar of Christ upon earth, again seated on his throne, and re-established in his secular dominion. You hear the thunders of the Vatican: and the edicts of the “meek and lowly” pontiff are issued for the revival, of the *Jesuits* and the INQUISITION! Look at *Spain*, and there behold the undisguised atrocities and deformities of the papal religion. Cross the channel which separates our island from the Hibernian coast, and you will find in those provinces where the boasted religion of Rome prevails, as much ignorance, and superstition as ever degraded and disgraced the darkest and most desolate clime, under the immediate despotism of the papal yoke. Let the recent proceedings of the Roman Catholics in the south of France towards their Protestant brethren, by which all the claims of justice and humanity have been sacrificed on the altar of bigotry, and deeds of darkness have been committed, which the annals of former times recorded, and which we fondly hoped, would never be repeated among civilised nations—let these nefarious transactions—connived at by the weakness or the iniquity of the government that owes its restoration to Protestant interference, be cited as authentic proofs that Popery is in itself, always the same, and that its vaunted immutability is its imperishable infamy!

In closing the series of our inquiries into the

principles and institutions of the Roman Catholic religion, I shall endeavour to illustrate its genius and tendency, by referring to those parts of the system which are its unquestionable characteristics, and adducing those facts which are notorious and incontrovertible.

I. I remark, in the first place, that *the essential principles of this religion directly tend to produce a practical disregard to the Holy Scriptures*. To this conclusion, you must, my friends, have frequently arrived, in various parts of our preceding course. You have been already informed that in the belief of a consistent member of this communion, the Scriptures are neither a sufficient nor an authoritative rule ; that they derive their claims to our regard, merely from the declarations of their Church ; and that the only true and infallible rule of faith is the traditional belief preserved from age to age, by the uninterrupted succession of their priesthood. I have endeavoured to shew you that all this system proceeds upon assumptions, and is actually contradicted by the testimonies of the ancient Fathers ; and that if the Scriptures are divine, only because their Church asserts them to be so, then it is perfectly nugatory and irrational to cite any parts of the sacred volume as authorities in their favour. It is needless to prove that such a scheme as this, necessarily reduces to very narrow limits the worth and consequence of divine revelation. Indeed to pretend that it is a revelation, after such assertions, is an insult to its author. If, like the citations from their fathers and councils, it be only another mode of recording the dogmas of their Church, it has no higher claim to be considered a divine revelation than these have ; and therefore the whole duty of a man consists in believing what *is* believed, without any further trouble about the matter. This is implicit faith ; and to promote this, is the end of

all the interpretations which Catholic divines affix to the word of God on these subjects. The question is not, what saith the Scripture?—but what saith our Church? and after receiving the doctrine from the Church, that is from the priest, the Scriptures are resorted to, for its confirmation. In this process the principle of all rational interpretation is at once discarded. A bias is previously imposed on the understanding. The man comes to the recorded will of Christ, not to learn, but to teach; and if after all his instructions, he should find it not easily flexible to his purpose, he is soon admonished of the danger of thinking for himself, and the necessity of yielding submission to established opinions.

It is an acknowledged fact, that on various occasions, the laity in former times were prohibited the free and unfettered perusal of the Scriptures; and since the reformation, it has been customary among their writers and teachers to employ strong terms of depreciation with respect to the uses and sufficiency of revealed truth. The consequence is what might have been expected. With comparatively few exceptions, the Roman Catholics are not in the habit of regarding the word of God at all. It may be occasionally read, because it is a text book, and because it is convenient to be able to refer to it when defending their creed. But it can never serve on their own principles, as a *guide* and *directory*—a light to their feet, and a lamp to their path. It may be the auxiliary of their devotion, and the confirmation of their belief; but it is never the *reason* of their faith; and deprived of this ultimate authority, its most important use is altogether lost sight of. The mind cannot possibly feel that deference for its assertions, however clear and explicit, which results from the conviction, that this is the only criterion of truth, and the only rule of conduct. Whatever impression may be made by its

plain declarations, and whatever fears and suspicions may be excited that their antecedent belief is inconsistent with them, they are instantly silenced and removed by their reliance on the oracular dictates and injunctions of their priests: for to all intents and purposes, whatever may be their theory on the subject, the priests are the living and infallible guides of their faith and practice; and the only reason that can possibly be assigned by the majority of their members, for any belief they indulge, is the assertion of that individual under whose care they happen to be placed. It may be said, that the majority of Protestants are in the very same predicament, and commit implicitly their faith to their instructors. To this I reply, that on our principles, an actual reference to the Scriptures is our only authority. We pretend not to say that truth or duty depend on our assertions. Our hearers may be as indolent and acquiescing as the disciples of the Roman priesthood; but it is not the practical result of our instructions. We exhort them to judge for themselves by examining the sacred record, and comparing our explanations with its assertions. And however passively a Protestant may rely on the interpretations of his minister, he will never tell you that the interpretation is the reason of his faith, but *the Bible, the Bible, alone*. On the other hand, when a Roman Catholic priest states the ultimate reason of his faith and the principle on which he requires the faith of his hearers, it is *not* the word of God, nor his citation of any passages from that word, but *the sense of the Church*; and on his *ipse dixit* alone, can they depend for the accurate communication of that sense. Their faith when analysed and traced to its primary source, is after all, an implicit confidence in the assertion of an individual priest; and here, and here alone, with respect to the greater part of their communion is the infallibility of the

Church ! We see at once the importance of this dogma to the interests of their system. Deprive THE CHURCH, that ambiguous, undefined, inaccessible thing of its supreme authority, and you deprive the individual priest of his power over the consciences of his flock. It is to this mysterious oracle he repairs, and from his converse with canons and councils and edicts and bulls, he comes to his awe-stricken hearers, shrouded in clouds and darkness. They know nothing of these things—but they are instructed at the peril of their souls, to receive implicitly all his communications—and this is the *practical* use of the doctrine of infallibility !

One consequence generally resulting from this state of things is, that you seldom meet with a Roman Catholic, intimately conversant with the Scriptures. There may be some instances of intelligence and discrimination ; but the habit of searching the sacred volume, for the purpose of attaining enlarged and comprehensive views of its various and interesting information, cannot be deemed a matter of importance on their own principles, and is therefore very naturally disregarded. I am aware that there may be too much reason for retorting the charge against other denominations of the Christian world—but it cannot with justice be urged as the practical result of those principles in which, as Protestants, we differ from the Church of Rome. Amongst professedly serious enquirers in religion, whatever may be their respective peculiarities, we invariably expect to find a careful and devout attention to the Scriptures. We appeal to it as one of the most decisive criteria of genuine and sincere piety ; and the want of such attention, whatever may be the measure and extent of outward observances, we are accustomed to consider as a melancholy proof of real indifference. I have no doubt, that the general state of mental habits amongst reflecting members of the Roman Church,

compared with those of similar character in Protestant societies, will be found to correspond with this diversity and opposition in their principles. In this comparison, let the careless, the profane, the merely nominal Christians, be left out of the account, and let us look only at those whose deportment would lead us to consider them, as really in earnest on the subject of religion. I apprehend the general result, would precisely accord with the statement I have laid down. In the one case, the information of the priest would be the immediate source and the ultimate reason of their faith ; and the Scriptures, if regarded at all, would be regarded because his advice sanctioned them and his interpretation explained them. In the other, the Scriptures would be the only rule and reason of their belief, and ministerial instructions would be received, solely because of their accordance with the sacred volume. The effect of this radical and characteristic difference, especially in Roman Catholic countries is, a general disregard to the word of God, an habitual indifference respecting it and an awful ignorance of its principles. The fact is an illustration of the direct tendency of their system ; for this state of things is its natural and necessary result, and no occasional instances to the contrary, form any substantial exception to the charge.

II. In the second place, *their principles and institutions lead to antisciptural views of the nature of personal religion.* All the representations of the New Testament on this important subject, imply the fact of human depravity, and describe the religion of the gospel, as the religion of sinners. The nature and relations of man render him the subject of moral government. According to the demands of this government, man is bound by immutable obligations to pure, perfect, and unceasing obedience. The slightest failure incurs guilt ;

and guilt on the principles of equity requires the infliction of punishment. To mitigate that infliction, to relax those obligations, to cancel that penalty, would be a tacit reflection on the justice of the previous sanctions of law, and exhibit, not the majesty, but the weakness of clemency. The perfection of God, the equity of his law and the rectitude of his administration, demand the execution of the righteous sentence, which his holy authority has denounced. In this awful state of guilt and exposure of punishment, all the human race is involved. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." (Rom. iii. 19. Gal iii. 22.) It is the glory of the gospel that it exhibits a perfect accordance between the sovereignty of divine mercy, and the claims of divine justice. This it secures, by the constitution of *a mediatorial system, a sacrificial mediation*; or to use the expressive language of Scripture, by the "obedience unto death" of HIM who became "sin, or a sin offering for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

All the intentions and purposes of divine mercy imply the previous guilt and misery of man, and are invariably connected with the mediation of Jesus Christ. It was the significant reference of ancient sacrifices to the Lamb of God, which gave them their typical efficacy and their real importance. Patriarchs and prophets regarded this medium of intercourse with God, as the basis of their confidence; and amidst all the obscurity which beclouded their prospects, there was sufficient light to guide them to HIM who was "all their salvation." HE was the subject and scope of the *sacrificial system* in all its variety and splendour;

and “to him gave all the prophets witness that “through his name, whosoever believeth in him, “should receive the remission of sins.”

The religion of the gospel consists in the cordial reception of all the divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ. Where this heavenly record is rightly understood and regarded, it becomes, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, “the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever,” the principle of spiritual and immortal life. Hence its great constituent elements are—“repentance towards God, “and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the one, there is the humbling consciousness of guilt and depravity; in the other, the submission of the heart to the method of salvation revealed in the gospel. Hence *the state of the heart in reference to Christ*, is the main subject of inquiry in experimental religion. Hence love to the Saviour is the characteristic feature of Christian piety; and the acts and habits of obedience to the will of God are the natural and legitimate proofs of its operation. Faith “worketh by love,” and thus it “purifieth the heart and overcometh the world.”

The Scriptures teach us that wherever the character of a man is marked by the influence of these evangelical and holy principles, it is our duty to receive and acknowledge him as a disciple of Christ. He may worship according to a different ritual; he may retain, in connection with the great and pre-eminent truths of the gospel, many peculiarities of opinion, which in our view may be unscriptural appendages to the Christian system; on various points of minor consequence, he may not pronounce the *shibboleth* of our party; but, if he has been taught by the illumination of the divine Spirit to perceive and feel his ruined and lost estate as a sinner in the sight of God—if under the conviction of sin and guilt, he has “fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel”—if the

atonement of a divine Redeemer be “ all his salvation,” and all his “ rejoicing”—if his hope and confidence before God, be the source of purity as well as of comfort, and he exhibit in his temper and conduct the “ image and superscription” of his Lord and Saviour, transcribing in his deportment, the example of him, on whom all his dependance is fixed—if these are the features we can trace in his spirit and principles and character, we feel compelled by a sense of duty, and disposed from the affections of our hearts to acknowledge him as “ a brother beloved,” and a “ fellow heir of eternal life.” Under the animating influence of these feelings, we are led to exclaim—“ GRACE BE WITH ALL THEM THAT LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY !”

It is this identity of character, this oneness of feeling, on the great subjects of vital and practical religion, which constitutes “the unity of the spirit;” and without it, all the uniformity secured by outward observances and legal enactments, is only a political and mechanical arrangement. Faith, repentance, and holiness are the essential constituents of scriptural religion; but according to the principles of the Church of Rome—these “ weighty matters” are nothing and vanity, unless a man belong to their communion! To prove his claim to the blessings of the Christian covenant, he must be previously assured of the sacramental validity of his baptism, which is made to depend on the canonical and apostolical succession of the priesthood. He must be within the pale of their Church or all his virtues and graces and hopes are nothing! I do not say that every individual member of their Church would assert this; but this is unquestionably the doctrine of their creeds and councils. Whatever might be the proofs of a man’s personal Christianity, by a life of the most exemplary conformity to the will of Christ, and an exclusive re-

liance for salvation on the merits of Christ, all would be of no avail unless he were in actual fellowship with them.

That system of opinions which thus provides for the intolerance of its adherents, and leads them to overlook the essential distinctions of Christian character, necessarily magnifies the importance of ritual observances. The consequence is obvious—an undue anxiety is felt about what is visible and external; and religion degenerates into a round of ceremonies. To this result the worship and service of the Roman Church are directly subservient; and the notions entertained respecting the efficacy of sacraments are in awful contradiction to the most solemn assurances of Scripture. If baptism regenerates, and confirmation sanctifies, and penance absolves, and the eucharist communicates the actual body and blood of Christ, and extreme unction gives them a passport to heaven, and all these wonders are effected by the mystic power of sacraments, validly administered, what must be the *general* and the *prevailing* state of sentiment and feeling in the Church of Rome, on the subject of personal religion? Will there not be a natural alienation of the mind from every thing rational and spiritual, and a fatal complacency and satisfaction in the "bodily service," the outward and visible signs of an instituted ritual? If to these practical results of the system, we add the effects arising from their views of *satisfaction for sin* by their own sufferings and duties, and the commutation of one kind of suffering for another, we shall not be surprised at the superstition and fanaticism which abound in those countries, where this religion is predominant. The intelligence, candour, and spiritual religion of individuals, in circumstances favourable to the counteraction of such tendencies, form no valid argument against these reasonings.

III. I remark, thirdly, that *their religion, in some of its peculiar dogmas, opposes the first principles of reason and common sense.* Far be it from me to deify human reason, and exalt its powers above the authority of revelation! Nothing can be more rational than to submit our reason to the will of God : but reason and revelation have each their separate and appropriate sphere ; and that being who imparted to man the capacity of reasoning, cannot require the abandonment of those self-evident principles on which the human mind invariably conducts its operations. There is nothing in Scripture to warrant the idea, that the exercise of faith demands the inversion of all those habits of thought, which are essential to the mental constitution of man. There may be facts revealed in a divinely accredited testimony, above and beyond my comprehension, and I may believe the fact, while I am ignorant of the mode or manner of that fact. There is nothing against either my reason or my senses in this belief. But to believe in direct opposition to every sense and faculty which God has given us, that bread and wine are flesh and blood—the *body, blood, soul and DIVINITY* of Jesus Christ, is a monstrous subversion of all reason, and in its consequences, a subversion of revelation itself. For revelation is accredited by miracles, and miracles are an appeal to the senses, necessarily implying the right exercise of the senses and the confidence of the mind in their impressions, in order to appreciate the value of miraculous attestations. But if we are taught to discredit the evidence of our senses ; in other words, if our senses are not to be trusted—then those who beheld the miracles of Christ and his disciples might have been deceived—then an actual miracle could not prove the truth of the dogma of Transubstantiation. Transubstantiation depends for its admission on the renunciation of the testimony

of the senses, and therefore *a miracle* which is an appeal to the senses could not possibly establish its claims to our belief. The practical consequence of such a disregard to the first principles of reason and common sense, is an implicit faith in the declarations of those who have thus acquired the inglorious and unresisting confidence of the mind; and by these means the basis of spiritual usurpation is laid in the demolition of rational evidence. But I proceed to observe,

IV. *That the principles of the papal religion tend to cherish the spirit of intolerance and persecution.* The history of religious intolerance, could its progress be accurately traced, would exhibit a most melancholy proof of human depravity. When that depravity appears in the secular transactions of life, we are not so much surprised as grieved at its awful developement: but when the very religion of mortals can blend itself with the darkest passions of our nature and furnish the real, or the ostensible cause of malevolence, we feel amazement and horror at the unnatural combination. Whence is it we inquire, that any system of opinions, dignified by the name of *religion*, can admit into alliance with itself, an agency purely infernal, and directed only to vengeance and extirpation? The monstrous incongruity is still greater, when we contemplate the original elements, out of which, it is pretended at least, every form and modification of the *Christian* religion have arisen. The records of Christianity exhibit a character and a model of transcendent benevolence in the life of our divine Redeemer; and the truths he taught, the obligations he enjoined and the prospects he unfolded to the faith and hope of his disciples, present the most powerful motives to the practical imitation of his example. One would have imagined, that the most imperfect representation of such a religion would have preserved at least that *one* character-

istic of its divine origin, *the spirit and the law of love!* It could not surely have been forgotten, that this was referred to, by the great teacher sent from God, as the most decisive test of resemblance to himself, and the most unequivocal proof of interest in his favour. He had recorded it as the distinct avowal of his design, that, he "came not to destroy men's lives but to save them," and the inference was therefore unquestionable, that intolerance and persecution in any form, and to any extent, are in eternal opposition to the spirit and genius of his religion.

It would have been well for the interests of the world, if the force of this conclusion had been felt and acted upon in the Christian Church. But it was soon forgotten, when the corruption of Christian doctrines and institutions had prepared the way for the most tremendous violations of "the law of love." The records of ecclesiastical history are stained with blood. Those offices, to the undertaking of which, nothing should have prompted, but pious zeal and holy benevolence, became by the appendages of worldly emolument, most attractive objects to unsanctified ambition. The possession of power uncounteracted by moral principle and unchecked by religious liberty, soon gave scope to the exercise of tyranny; and out of this spirit arose the usurped prerogatives and the unbounded domination of the See of Rome. The world "wondering at the beast," beheld with silent astonishment, the gradual encroachments of a spiritual empire, which by the refinement and extent of its policy, acquired and absorbed within itself the supreme jurisdiction of all affairs that upon any principle of construction could be reckoned spiritual and ecclesiastical; till it became at length, a maxim, supported by the authority of innumerable precedents, that *errors of opinion were within the cognizance of the secular power, and exposed their*

unfortunate adherents to fines, imprisonment and death.

Before the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, the emperors of Pagan Rome had frequently inflicted the most dreadful cruelties on their Christian subjects, and awfully verified the prediction of the Apostle, that "all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." I am not about to horrify you, by any recitals of those tragic acts which have fixed indelible infamy on the Roman name; but I ask, might it not have been expected, that as soon as Christianity acquired the ascendency, its mild and beneficent principles would have taught all in authority, to employ no weapon for its future propagation but persuasion and argument? And such unquestionably, would have been the result, had it been pure and uncorrupted Christianity. But it was degraded, perverted, and polluted, before it was rendered capable of conforming itself to the intolerance of Paganism. It was not Christianity that ascended the throne and issued edicts of bigotry, and required the subjection of faith and obedience at the point of the sword. It was a worldly religion, a religion secularised by its alliance with the civil power, a religion assuming the name of Christianity that perpetrated these deeds of darkness, and seemed rather the offspring of hell, than the descendant of heaven! The immediate origin of persecution in the nominally Christian Church, was the combination of religion with secular power, by which the authority of the one became the instrument of enforcing the requisitions of the other. Separate any specific modification of Christianity or of religion from this alliance as its support, and you render the most intolerant system of opinions harmless. But incorporate religion with the state, so as to identify their interests, and *unless the state make express provision for the liberty of dissentients, and*

absolutely refuse to recognise heresy and schism as crimes, that incorporation to a greater or less degree, will be persecuting and intolerant. When the emperor of Rome, after Christianity was the religion of the empire by the enactments of law, happened to be an Arian, the Arians persecuted the Trinitarians ; and when he was reputedly orthodox, the heretics were in their turn the victims of persecution. Persecution was thought by all parties a duty and what our Lord foretold, of the sufferings of the primitive Christians, that “ the time would come, when whosoever killed them, would think he did God service,”* was literally applicable to the spirit displayed by the “ Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church of Rome,” towards all who seceded from her communion, or refused to come within her pale. So matters continued, till the time of the reformation ; nor did the reformation at once and immediately reform this worst of heresies, the spirit and temper of persecution. Within the last century an amazing change has been effected in the general tone of thinking and feeling on this subject, in our own country. The frequent interchange of opinions, the liberty of proving and defending, without being led to a prison or a stake, as the only method of conversion, and the friendly collision of sentiment and feeling on the various topics of religious inquiry have tended to produce most beneficial results. The laws of Britain have distinctly and frequently recognised the sacred rights of conscience, and thus restrained the power of ecclesiastical intolerance ; and the spirit of the law has happily diffused itself through the community.

* John xvi. 2. See an admirable Sermon, on this passage by Dr. Grosvenor, in the Salter's Hall Lectures, Vol. II—and an able and highly argumentative discourse by Dr. Doddridge, on “ the absurdity and sin of Persecution.” Works—Vol. III. p. 117. (Leeds Edit.)

It is not uncommon on political occasions, to find even Roman Catholics avowing the same general principles of religious liberty with those which pervade other classes of society; and I have no doubt that *individuals* among them are sincere in that avowal. *But is not the Church of Rome wherever it is the established or predominant religion, an intolerant and a persecuting religion? And do not its essential principles produce and cherish this intolerance?* It is no answer to these questions, to inform me, that any particular Catholic state allows of toleration, or that *English Catholics* disavow the imputation which these inquiries would affix to them. Political considerations may in numberless cases restrain and modify and soften the general, and otherwise invariable tendencies of the system. But what, I ask, are the principles of their canons and creeds and councils? They condemn in the first place the right of private judgment. In the next place, they consider every instance of deviation from their creed as *heresy*, and all without the pale of their Church, as *Schismatics*. In the third place, heresy and schism according to the uniform language of their councils are *mortal sins*; and unrepented of, will secure the inevitable damnation of those who commit them. In the fourth place, they always employ *where they can*, the power of the civil magistrate to assist them in putting into execution the sentence of their ecclesiastical courts. Hence the well known phrase “to deliver to the secular powers,” by which this transfer of their victims is described. Fifthly, they have most unequivocally recognised and established the principle of persecution in the decrees of their general councils. In the fifth council of Toledo, the holy Fathers say—“we promulge this decree pleasing to God, that who soever hereafter shall succeed to the kingdom, shall not ascend the throne, till he has sworn

" among other oaths, to permit no man to live in
 " his kingdom, *who is not a Catholic*: and if
 " after he has taken the reins of government, he
 " shall violate this promise, let him be *anathema maranatha* in the sight of the eternal God and
 " become fuel of the eternal fire."*

The Council of Lateran, under Pope Innocent III. decreed, that "all heresy, and heretics should be anathematised, and these being condemned, must be left to the secular power to be punished." By the same council, magistrates and princes and all civil authorities are commanded to swear, that "they will endeavour, *bona fide*, and with all their " might, to exterminate from every part of their " dominion, all heretical subjects, universally, that " are marked out by the Church." And if this engagement be not fulfilled, the council proceeds to absolve the subjects of such non-complying governments, from their allegiance.† The sanguinary codes of Justinian and Theodosius inflicted capital punishment on heretics, through the influence and instigation of the Roman priesthood.‡ The writ for *burning heretics*, among the ancient precedents of our own law, and thought by some to be as old as the common law itself, may be traced to the general prevalence of the maxim, that heresy was a crime, which it was the province of the spiritual court to prove, and for which the secular power punished. The history of the Church of Rome, after its adulterous connection with the kingdoms of this world, affords one continued series of illustrations on this melancholy subject.

Hence I observe, sixthly, that *Persecution has been practised in the Roman Church in every age*. After the decree of the Lateran council, the Albi-

* Caranza. Sum. Concil. p. 404.

† Ibid. p. 602. Cited by Dr. Grosvenor, in the Sermon referred to—p. 12—14.

‡ See Blackstone's Commentaries. Vol. iv. B. 4, C. 4.

genses were murdered by thousands for no other reason but because they were heretics. They are represented by their adversaries as *traitors* and as *seditionists* in their principles : but separation from the Church was their treason—and defending themselves against legalised and consecrated murderers was the only proof of their sedition. In the reign of our Henry IV. the popish clergy obtained an act of parliament, by which a bishop, without the intervention of a synod, could convict of heresy, and “unless the convict abjured his opinions, or “if after abjuration he relapsed, the sheriff was “bound *ex officio*, if required by the bishop to “commit the unhappy victim to the flames, with-“out waiting for the consent of the crown.”* The reigns of Mary in England, of Charles V. in Germany, and of Louis XIV. in France ; the massacre of the Irish Protestants—the fatal Bartholomew Day in Paris—the revocation of the edict of Nantz, in consequence of which thousands fled to other countries, and thousands were murdered at home—the recent atrocities in the south of that unhappy country—the official declaration of the Belgian bishops against the tolerating principles of their new sovereign—and the conduct of the present pontiff, since his restoration to the See of Rome—all these authentic and undisputed facts “speak volumes” on the subject. Above all, pre-eminent in atrocity and crime—an eternal infamy to the nation that bears upon its bosom the infernal burden, and groans on under the oppression, is THE INQUISITION ! This is not the place for detailing its history and its operations. That history is written in CHARACTERS OF BLOOD, and those operations are marked by every thing that is savage, unrelenting, treacherous, malignant, and diabolical ! The present pontiff has sanctioned the re-establish-

* Ibid. p. 27. (Burns' Edition.)

ment of this engine of priestly and prelatical intolerance, under the reign of the despot who is now the King of Spain ; and has condescended to *moderate* the severity of its operation. I know that there are intelligent and candid members of the Papal Church who deplore these evils, and condemn the intolerance out of which they arise; but such protestations are of no avail, and affect not the general argument supported by these facts, that *persecution is cherished and sanctioned by the principles of their system.* Let those in authority in their Church, their bishops and dignitaries, and secular powers unite in promoting the convention of a *general council*; let that council under the presidency of their pontiff revoke, cancel and annul all the acts of former councils, which directly or indirectly support the principles of *force* and *coercion* in religious matters ; let them recognise the rights of conscience and destroy the Inquisition ; let them condemn all interference of the civil with the ecclesiastical power, and limit the jurisdiction of the clergy to the spiritual duties of their office ; let them promulgate the healing principles of conciliation and employ in the support of their system, only the weapons of persuasion and reasoning—and then, I will venture to predict, *Popery will be harmless.* But as soon may the “Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots,” as this revolution be effected in the principle and tendencies of the papal religion.

It has been often retorted on Protestants, by the advocates of Popery, that they have been guilty of the crime of persecution ; and they will not unfrequently present their martyrology of those who suffered in the reigns of Elizabeth and her immediate successors as proofs of the fact. I have already confessed that the first reformers did not reform at once and immediately, the dreadful heresy of persecution. Too long the Protestant

Churches, retained a portion of this unscriptural leaven; and to this day, the latent principle of persecution is preserved in the unrevoked though virtually obsolete statutes which disgrace some parts of our penal code, and in the civil disqualifications which result from a consistent and conscientious non-conformity to the national establishment. But admitting while we lament the evils which have arisen from the spirit of persecution, displayed by Protestants toward Catholics, or against one another, I observe, that to the Church of Rome may this spirit be traced, as to its primary source. Thence they derived it—and there they found it sanctioned—justified—and commanded! That the first reformers did not abandon all the errors of the papal system, only proves that they were imperfect and short-sighted men. But do their principles as *Protestants* support persecution? Has there not been a progressive illumination on this important subject, necessarily arising from the prevalence of Protestantism? Have not the Protestant states of Europe exhibited that degree and extent of toleration, which never yet existed in Roman Catholic countries? Do not Catholics themselves trace the diversities of sects amongst us, and which they specify as a proof of the evil of Protestantism to the principle of toleration, and with few exceptions confess that if their church were restored to its *pristine grandeur* and *influence*, these distinctions and diversities would be abolished? And while Protestants have been acquiring more enlarged and comprehensive views of the nature of religious liberty, has there been a corresponding progress in the views and feelings of their Catholic neighbours? As to the fact of persecution in former times, there is no parallel whatever, between the conduct of Protestants, towards Papists, and of Papists towards Protestants. When the Priests and Jesuits in the reign of Eliza-

beth were put to death, it was not *for heresy*, or by the sentence of a spiritual court, but under colour at least, of treasonable conspiracies against the crown. When penal statutes were enacted against the Papists, it was on the principle of self-preservation against the notorious and sanguinary designs of a foreign power, that employed its ecclesiastical influence for secular purposes. It was not against them, as members of another religious communion, *but as the allies and supporters of the Pope*, who had actually excommunicated and anathematized the sovereign of these realms, and absolved her subjects from their allegiance.* How immensely different were these transactions, from the conduct pursued under the preceding reign ! Then, it was *on account of religion*; it was because the accused were actually convicted of not believing in the supremacy of the Pope, and transubstantiation, and other dogmas of the Church of Rome, that they were condemned and burnt !

In the proceedings of the Pope, after the Parisian massacre, there was a horrible exemplification of the genius and tendency of popery. "A Jubilee," says Bishop Burnet, "was granted to all who had "been in this butchery; and they were commanded "to go every where and bless God, for the "success of that action: The Pope sent Cardinal "Urson, his legate to France, to thank the king "for so great a service done to the Church, and "to desire him to go on, and extirpate heresy, "root and branch, that it might never grow again. "And as the legate passed through on his journey "to Paris, *he gave a plenary absolution to all that "had been actors in the massacre!*"

A tremendous explosion of popular feeling on the subject of Popery, took place in this country,

* *Burnett's History of the Reformation.* Vol. II. app. p. 377.
—See APPENDIX. Note U.

in the year 1780. The causes of this tumult were deeply lamented by all enlightened and reflecting persons. But was there any connivance by the state, or any sanction afforded by the ecclesiastical authorities of this realm? Far from it—the civil, military and judicial powers of the government were instantly employed to check the progress of intolerance and punish the offenders. Compare these transactions with the late proceedings of the French Government towards the rioters, and murderers and assassins in the department *Du Gard*, in the South of France. In the name of religion, and for the sake of the Church, they continue still to perpetrate occasionally the most outrageous deeds of daring, of insult, and of injustice! Feeble and inefficient remonstrances are now and then heard. No vigorous execution of the laws—no punishment of the principal offenders—no restoration of the pillaged property of the sufferers—no declaration of abhorrence on the part of his Holiness of such methods of supporting the Church and eradicating heresy—but a silent, sickening apathy—the stoicism of intolerance, the cool-blooded insensibility of despotism that looks calmly on and says, like the first murderer—“AM I MY BROTHER’S KEEPER!”

I am far from charging upon all the members of the Roman Church, the spirit of bigotry and persecution, and believe that there are numbers of well informed and liberal Catholics who deplore with genuine grief these dreadful ebullitions of rancour. The question however, is, not what individuals think and how do they act—but what is the natural tendency of the religious system which they espouse and defend? Are not the *anathemas* and *execrations* so frequently occurring in the canons and formularies of their Church, against all heretics and schismatics—the actual proceedings of their own Popes—and the history of those sove-

reigns and governments, who have been led by papal influence, decisive illustrations of the general spirit of the system? Do they not, when uncounteracted by the prevalence of Protestant principles, necessarily cause an intolerant disposition to pervade the mass of the community, and especially those in the lower walks of life? Is it not a fact, that in Roman Catholic countries, they talk and think of *heretics*, with unqualified contempt. The reason is obvious—they are never taught to allow and recognise the rights of conscience; and a ruthless and arrogant exclusiveness is the first-rate dogma of their Church. No one else belongs to *the Church*: all are “heathen men and publicans;” and “the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord” are **THEY!**

I shall now close this series of inquiries into the Principles and Institutions of the Roman Catholic Religion, by stating a few brief deductions from the whole. And in the *first* place, the facts and reasonings to which our attention has been directed, *justify our separation from the Church of Rome*. The reformation proceeded upon great and general principles, and was in its beginning, effected by a variety of concurrent circumstances. It is a favourite method of argument with our opponents, to select those incidents of a political nature, and those instances of exceptionable conduct on the part of such as were engaged in the reformation, which afford scope for censure and animadversion, and then to charge them on our principles. How would Christianity itself stand the test, and especially *their* religion, if tried by such a criterion? We never pretend to assert that all the actors and motives and circumstances that were combined in producing the great secession, from the Church of Rome, were altogether right; but we contend that at any time and at all times, such a secession was most imperiously demanded, and will ever

be capable of the most satisfactory vindication. If the Church of Rome by its decisions, set aside the supreme authority of revelation ; if oral tradition is preferred to the written records of inspiration ; if the bishop of Rome claim the absolute supremacy of the Church ; if the institutions of Jesus Christ are corrupted ; if we are called upon, to renounce our reason and our senses ; if an ecclesiastical domination “ lord it over the heritage of God,” and employ force and coercion in the support of their measures ; if the purity and simplicity of the gospel be endangered by their unscriptural views of the sacrifice of the mass, the sale of indulgences, the doctrine of merit, and the fire of purgatory ; if they demand implicit and unqualified subjection on the pain of anathema—proscription—and death in this world—and damnation in the next ; and if the history of their Church present one continued series of oppressions, exactions, intolerance and persecution, so that the symbols of prophecy are embodied and explained in its proceedings—then it becomes us to hear the warning voice, “ COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, “ THAT YE BE NOT PARTAKERS OF HER SINS AND “ THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES.”

As *Protestant dissenters*, we consider ourselves warranted in our separation from the hierarchy of our own country, on the same general principles which justify the Protestant secession from the hierarchy of Rome. The sufficiency of Scripture—the supreme legislative authority of Jesus Christ—the right of private judgment—and the unlawfulness of human dictation, in matters purely religious, are the primary reasons of dissent from the Papal communion ; and we think the same reasons apply to the Protestant communion, legally incorporated and supported by exclusive civil privileges in this country. We object to it as an establishment, and as an episcopal estab-

blishment ; and we conceive its constitution and administration to be alike unscriptural. We rejoice at the same time, in the number of its pious, intelligent, and useful members, and are willing, most cordially, to unite with them on the common principles of our Protestant Christianity, in every “ work of faith and labour of love.” But we cannot forget that in many instances, the Church of England symbolises with the Church of Rome, conforms to its ceremonies, adopts its notions of the efficacy of sacraments, imbibes a large portion of its anti-catholic spirit, and arrogates to itself the same exclusive privileges which the more consistent Church of Rome, denies alike to all, who secede from her communion. We consider the reformation still imperfect and incomplete, and believe that in proportion to the right understanding of the only rational and defensible principle of separation from the Roman hierarchy, will that deficiency be generally acknowledged and deplored.

In the *second* place, I would exhort you, my Christian friends, to *the duty of unfeigned gratitude to God, that you live in a day when the rights of conscience are recognized, and the blessings of religious liberty, more widely diffused than at any preceding period.* Of all earthly enjoyments, religious liberty is the most valuable. It is the unalienable right of every human being ; and no occasional disorder arising from its abuse and perversion, can equal the consequences which spring from unrighteous attempts to restrain and abridge its operations. To God alone I am accountable for my religious principles ; and what secular power ought to interfere between God and conscience ? There was a period, when such a power did interfere ; when our venerable forefathers were exposed to personal suffering, and the loss of all their temporal and social comforts, because they could not

conform to an ecclesiastical requisition. There was a period, when the same sanguinary principle that lighted the torch of persecution in Smithfield, prepared *an act of uniformity*, and all its dreadful apparatus of imprisonment, spoliation and exile for puritans and non-conformists. There was a period when a Presbyterian bigot, called toleration, the *gangrene* of the church, upbraided the Protector for allowing all the subjects of his government, the exercise of their religious rights. But those times are gone by—we trust, for ever! In this land of liberty, we may hear the distant thunder of the Vatican, and smile at the fury of pontifical vengeance;—it “grieves, but alarms us not.” The demon of persecution, starting from his slumber and his chains, may shake himself as aforetime: and the racks and tortures of the Inquisition may be again applied to the victims of a relentless intolerance. The disciples of Loyola may creep forth from their lurking places and bask in the sunshine of papal favour. But these we trust are only the convulsive efforts of a dying cause, permitted to exhibit to the world the unaltered features of that despotism which has so long revelled in its usurpations, and scattered around it, “firebrands, arrows, and death!” Let us, Christians, rejoice in the unmolested liberties we enjoy, and fervently pray that the radiance of heavenly truth may dispel the delusions of superstition, the gloom of bigotry and the spiritual darkness which has so long invested the fairest portions of the earth! “ARISE O GOD, PLEAD THINE OWN CAUSE, LET NOT MAN PREVAIL!”

I would remind you, in the *third place*, of *the obligations you are under as Protestants, to a corresponding and proportionate excellence of Christian character*. You have advantages and privileges that involve in them, the most solemn and affecting responsibility. Your opportunities of

knowledge and usefulness, your civil and religious liberties, your free access to the sacred Scriptures, and your abundant means of instruction are talents of high value, committed to your care, by the sovereign Proprietor of the universe. Your residence is fixed in the land of freedom and under the meridian of spiritual illumination. Let me ask—“what do ye more than others” who have not your advantages? While you contend for your rights and liberties as Protestants—are you *genuine* and *scriptural Christians*? Are you “seeking FIRST the kingdom of God and his righteousness?” Does the “grace of God teach you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, “righteously, and godly in this present world?” Are you as careful and devout in your religious observances, as regular in your attendance on divine worship, as conscientious in the performance of private duties, as many of the members of that communion from which you separate, and whose principles and institutions have formed the subjects of our investigation? Do you excel them in the knowledge of the word of God, and are you desirous of exemplifying the moral influence of your superior means of understanding divine truth, by the spirituality of your temper, the benevolence of your disposition, and the consistency of your deportment? Remember, my friends, “to whom much is given, of them much is required.” It will be far “more tolerable in the day of judgment,” for those who have lived under the darkest night of Popery, than for you, who “know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” amidst the religious privileges of the present day.

Let me exhort you, in the *fourth* place, *to cultivate and display a spirit of habitual kindness and conciliation towards those who differ from you.* This requires no sacrifice of truth, no compromise.

of principle, no unhallowed and unscriptural concessions. You may be firm, intrepid, and inflexible advocates of what you conscientiously deem to be important, and expose in all their folly and deformity the consequences and tendencies of error; and yet towards those who maintain it, you may and you ought to manifest the spirit of Christian meekness. Candour is not indifference, and zeal is not intolerance; and while you avoid these dangerous extremes, you may unite those truly Christian virtues for which they are often the specious substitutes. Let me beseech you, never to imitate the worst part of Popery—its uncharitable and ferocious bigotry. Never imagine that penal and disqualifying statutes will convince a man's judgment, and reclaim him from his prejudices. Oppose sophistry by argument, absurdity by exposure, and tradition by Scripture. Distinguish between *persons* and *principles*; and remember “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

Finally, I would remind you of the duty of *holding fast your profession, and attempting by every rational and scriptural method, to diffuse the knowledge of those great principles, which give to the Protestant cause all its value and importance.* Because Protestantism restores to the Scriptures their paramount and exclusive sufficiency, it presents the purest medium for the communication and defence of sacred truth. But Protestantism itself is of no value, if the great and characteristic peculiarities of the gospel be abandoned. Forget the principles for which the first reformers suffered and bled—the principles that support the hopes of a penitent sinner in the view of eternity—the principles that respect the state of man as a sinner—his justification by faith in a divine Redeemer, and the necessity of spiritual influence to enlighten and purify the darkened and polluted mind of

man—forget and abandon these doctrines of our most holy faith, and it is of no ultimate consequence what you believe or what you deny. You may be Protestants—you may be Protestant dissenters—you may have the most correct and exalted notions of liberty and human right and in this or any other cause you may be martyrs;—but you are NOT *Christians*! It is the relation and subser-viency of Protestantism to Christianity, that forms its highest and its best commendation; and de-prived of this sacred connection, it is the mere residuum of a secular system. Whatever may be its utility to the temporal interest of mankind, it will afford you no scriptural consolation in the prospect of the eternal world! Be firm then, in your adherence to *evangelical* truth, to all that glorious combination of doctrines, for which the Fathers of the Reformation, and the Fathers of Nonconformity, were alike zealous. Let them live in your belief, your confessions, your prayers, and your exertions. Endeavour by every practicable method to promote their universal diffusion; and rejoice in the approach of that day, when the Church of God shall be purified from every admixture of error and corruption, and as “the perfection of beauty” exhibiting the reflected light of truth and holiness, become “the joy of the whole earth!”

“ THEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, BE YE
“ STEDFAST, UNMOVEABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING
“ IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, FORASMUCH AS YE
“ KNOW THAT YOUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN IN
“ THE LORD.”

END OF THE LECTURES.

APPENDIX.

Containing Historical and Critical Illustrations.

NOTE A. (Page 5.)

THAT such are the uniform reasonings of Roman Catholic writers is evident from all their publications. "This is a matter so well known," says Jones, in his invaluable work on the Canon of Scripture, "that I shall not produce many instances to prove it. Hermannus, in the abundance of his zeal, affirms, *the Scriptures are of no more value than Æsop's Fables, without the authority of the Church*; and Bailius, *that he should give no more credit to St. Matthew, than Livy, unless the Church obliged him*. Tiletanus, bishop of Ypres, says, *This is the only way of distinguishing between Canonical and Apocryphal Scriptures*. To the same purpose Pighius, Eckius, Bellarmine, and many of their most celebrated writers. By the authority of the Church, these authors plainly mean a power lodged in the Church of Rome, and her synods, of determination, what books are the word of God; than which nothing can be more absurd, or contradictory to common sense: for if so, it is possible, nay it is easy for them, to make a book, which is not divine, to be so; and (to make use of Hermannus's instance) it is possible Æsop's Fables may in time become as good a part of Scripture, as Saint Paul's Epistles; nay, once more, it is very possible the books of Celsus, Julian, and Porphyry, were they extant, might become a part of the New Testament, though they were designedly written against it."—Jones "on the Canon." Vol. I. p. 45, 46. (Oxford edition, 1798.)

NOTE B. (Page 7.)

"THE canon of the New Testament consists of twenty-seven books, which were written by eight different authors, all of whom were contemporary with our Saviour. These books were written at different times, and at places remote from each other; and when the latest of them was published, the gospel had been preached, and churches founded, in many parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa. Different churches at first received different books, according to their situation and circumstances; their canons were gradually enlarged, and it was not long, though the precise time is not known, before the same, or very nearly the same, books were acknowledged by the Christians of all countries.

"The persecutions, under which the professors of the gospel continually laboured, and the want of a national establishment of Christianity, prevented, for several centuries, any general assembly of Christians for the purpose of settling the canon of their Scriptures. Since, therefore, there could be no declaration by public authority upon this subject for so long a period, recourse must be had to ecclesiastical writers for the earliest catalogues of the books of the New Testament; and we have the satisfaction of finding an almost perfect agreement among them.

"The first writer, who has left us a regular catalogue of the books of the New Testament, is Origen, who lived in the beginning of the third century, although, as will hereafter appear, they are all mentioned separately by much earlier authors. This catalogue is the same as our present canon, except that it omits the epistles of St. James and St. Jude; but Origen, in other parts of his writings, refers to these epistles as the productions of those Apostles. In the following century we have catalogues in the remaining works of Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, Philaster, Jerome, Ruffin, and Augustine, and those settled at the provincial councils of Laodicea and Carthage.* Of these eleven catalogues, seven exactly agree with our canon; and the other four differ

* This was the third council at Carthage.

only in these respects, namely, three omit the Revelation only, and Philaster, in his catalogue, omits the Epistle to the Hebrews, as well as the Revelation; but he acknowledges both these books in other parts of his works. These catalogues include no books which are not in our canon; and we learn from Polycarp, who was contemporary with the Apostles, and from Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, all of whom lived in the second century, that the primitive Church admitted no other gospels, but those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These authors also, and many others, assure us, that the Scriptures of the New Testament were publicly read in Christian congregations; and the fifty-ninth canon of the council of Laodicea expressly orders that the books of the canon, and no others, should be read in the Churches.* Copies of these books were dispersed every where. Christians of every denomination appealed to them in all their various controversies as authentic testimony; and both the Jewish and Pagan enemies of the gospel understood, that they contained the faith of Christians. This publicity of the books of the New Testament rendered designed corruption utterly impracticable; it is however to be expected that the purity of these books, like that of the Old Testament should have suffered, in a long series of years, from the negligence of transcribers.† The most minute care and attention have been employed in collating the remaining manuscripts of the whole and of every part of the New Testament, and a considerable number of various readings has been discovered; but they are not of such a nature as to affect any essential article of our faith, or any indispensable rule of life. It seems indeed to have been wisely ordered by a kind providence, that no important doctrine or precept should rest

* Some few works of the apostolical fathers were also read in the Churches of some places, but nevertheless they were not received as sacred Scripture. In like manner we read certain parts of the apocryphal books in our Churches, although we do not admit those books into our canon. They are read "for example of life and instruction of manners, but are not applied to establish any doctrine." Art. 6. of our Church.

† Origen, Hom. 8. in Mat. complains of the negligence of transcribers, and so does Jerome. Præf. in 4 Evang.

upon a single text of Scripture, nor even upon the credit of one writer; and therefore we are never compelled to have recourse to a disputed passage in support of any fundamental principle of our religion; and while we contend, that a single inspired authority is a sufficient proof of any proposition in theology or morals, we acknowledge that the different writers of the New Testament, by their perfect agreement in all material points, confirm and strengthen each other; and that the gospel derives great advantages, from the number and consisteney of the witnesses to its truth.

" The respective testimonies to the genuineness of the several books of the New Testament will be stated when we treat of them separately; at present it will be sufficient to observe, that the four Gospels,* the Acts of the Apostles, the thirteen first Epistles of St. Paul, the first Epistle of St. Peter, and the first Epistle of St. John, were always acknowledged to be written by the persons whose names they bear; and that the genuineness of the other seven books, namely, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third Epistles of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Revelation, was never denied by the Catholic Church; doubts only were entertained, at a very early period, concerning the right of these books to be admitted into the canon, because different evidence had not been received at all places that they were really apostolical writings. It is possible that they might not come into general circulation so soon as the gospels and other epistles, and there might be some difficulty in obtaining

* Irenæus, lib. 3. cap. 2. is the earliest author who expressly mentions all the four Gospels, and he names them in the order in which they stand in our New Testaments. Tatian, about the same time, namely, between the middle and end of the second century, composed a Harmony of the Gospels, the first attempt of the kind, which he called "Diatessaron," "Of the Four," and which demonstrates that there were then four Gospels, and no more, of established authority in the Church. Eus. Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. cap. 29. Early in the third century, Ammonius also wrote a Harmony of the Four Gospels. Tertullian adv. Marc. lib. 4. cap. 1. at the end of the second century, and Origen, in the beginning of the third century, both mention our present four Gospels, and no other. Vide Eus. Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 25. & lib. 3. cap. 24.

testimony concerning them at places remote from the countries where they were first published; but as soon as there was time and opportunity for making the necessary inquiries, and for ascertaining the authors of these books, the genuineness of them all was universally allowed; and therefore this circumstance of temporary doubt, instead of invalidating the authority of these books, gives a sanction to the whole collection, by proving the caution with which any book was admitted into the sacred canon. Indeed the early Christians had such means of knowing the truth, and exercised so much care and judgment in settling the canon of the New Testament, that no writing, which was pronounced by them genuine, has been found to be spurious, nor any genuine, which they rejected. Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, and all the other early adversaries of Christianity, admitted that the books of the New Testament were all written by the persons whose names they bear: and that circumstance is itself a sufficient proof of the genuineness of these books."—*Bishop Tomline's Elements of Theology.* Vol. I. p. 269—276.

NOTE C. (*Page 9.*)

"THE epistles and gospels, being the authentic record in which the whole doctrines, precepts, and promises of the gospel are contained, we may believe that, although no injunction had been given by the Apostles respecting the communication of their writings, the members of the churches, to which their epistles and gospels were sent, moved by their own piety and good sense, would be anxious to communicate them; and would not grudge either the expence of transcribing them, or the trouble of sending them to all churches with which they had any connection. The persons likewise who were employed, whether in transcribing, or in carrying these excellent writings to the neighbouring churches, would take great delight in the work; thinking themselves both usefully and honourably employed.

Nay, I am persuaded that such of the brethren as could afford the expence, and were capable of reading these divinely inspired writings, would get them transcribed for their own use : so that copies of these books would be multiplied and dispersed in a very short time. This accounts for St. Paul's epistles, in particular, being so generally known, read, and acknowledged by all Christians, in the very first age ; as we learn from Peter, who speaks of the epistles which his beloved brother Paul had written to the persons to whom he himself wrote his second epistle, chap. iii. 16. It seems, before Peter wrote that letter, he had seen and read Paul's epistles to the Galatians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians. He speaks also of *all Paul's other epistles* ; from which some learned men have inferred, that Paul, by that time, was dead, and that all his writings had come to Peter's hands. Nay, Peter insinuates that they were then universally read and acknowledged as inspired writings ; for he tells us, *the ignorant and unstable wrested them, as they did the other Scriptures also, to their own destruction.*

" The writings of the Apostles and Evangelists being thus early and wisely dispersed among the disciples of Christ, I think it cannot be doubted that the persons who obtained copies of them, regarded them as precious treasures of divine truth, and preserved them with the utmost care. We are morally certain, therefore, that none of the inspired writings, either of the Evangelists or of the Apostles, have been lost ; and, in particular, that the suspicion which some have entertained of the loss of certain epistles of Paul, is destitute of probability. His inspired writings were all sent to persons greatly interested in them, who, while they preserved their own copies with the utmost care, were, no doubt, very diligent in circulating transcripts from them among the other churches ; so that, being widely dispersed, highly respected, and much read, none of them, I think, could perish. What puts this matter beyond doubt, is, that while all the sacred books which now remain are often quoted by the most ancient Christian writers, whose works have come down to us, in none of them, nor in any other author whatever, is there

so much as a single quotation from any apostolical writing that is not at present in our canon; nor the least hint from which it can be gathered, that any apostolical writing ever existed, which we do not at present possess.

“ Further, as none of the apostolical writings have been lost, so no material alteration hath taken place in any of those which remain. For the autographs having, in all probability, been long preserved with care, by the rulers of the churches to which these were sent, if any material alteration, in particular copies, had ever been attempted, for the purpose of supporting heresy, the fraud must instantly have been detected, by comparing the vitiated copies with the autographs. And even after the autographs, by length of time, or by accident, were lost, the consent of such a number of copies as might easily be procured and compared in every country, was at all times sufficient for establishing the genuine text, and for correcting whatever alteration might be made, whether through accident or design. Nor is this all: the many disputes about articles of faith which took place in the Christian Church, almost from the beginning, though productive of much mischief in other respects, secured the Scriptures from all vitiation. For the different sects of Christians, constantly appealing to the sacred oracles, in support of their particular opinions, each would take care that their opponents quoted the Scriptures fairly, and transcribed them faithfully. And thus the different parties of Christians, being checks on each other, every possibility of vitiating the Scriptures was absolutely precluded.”

—*Macknight's Preliminary Essays to his Translation of the Epistles.* Vol. I. Ess. 2. p. 75—77.

NOTE D. (*Page 18.*)

“ THERE are others, which they make use of, far less to the purpose, because they signify only the duty of pastors, and what they are appointed to do, and not that, which in effect they will

do. Such as these ; “ Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” Matth. xxviii. 19. “ Son of man, I have set thee for a watch-man over the house of Israel.” Ezek. xxxiii. 7. “ The priest’s lips shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth.” Mal. ii. 7. “ I have set watch-men upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night.” Isa. lxii. 6. “ And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Eph. iv. 11. These and some other like passages shew to what the office of the ministry is naturally appointed, and the obligation of those that are called to it ; but they are very far from giving from thence a prerogative of infallibility.

“ They allege also some passages that recommend to the faithful the having a respect for and an obedience to their pastors. Such are these ; “ He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me.” Luke xx. 16. “ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls.” Heb. xiii. 17. “ The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat ; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works.” Matt. xxiii. 3. But I cannot see what this last passage sets before us, but that all those exhortations that God makes to the faithful to have a submission to the word of their pastors, denote very truly the duty of the people in that matter, but they do not in the least settle any infallibility in their pastors. For is it this, that Jesus Christ would say, That the Scribes and Pharisees, as long as they sat in the chair of Moses, were infallible ?—he that on the contrary accused them of having made void the commandments of God by their traditions, and who elsewhere gave his disciples such a charge to take heed of the leaven of the Pharisees, that is to say, of their pernicious doctrines ? How many times are obedience, respect, and submission, recommended to children to give to their fathers, in the Scriptures ? Is it that the Scripture in this ascribes to fathers an infallibility ? It is without

doubt the King's pleasure that we should submit ourselves to his officers, and that we should obey them ; but he does not mean to advance them to be infallible, nor to ordain us to obey them if they shall happen to command us those things that are directly contrary to his service, and to that fidelity which we owe to our sovereign. It is then true that all those exhortations to hear our pastors and obey their words, are always to be restrained by this clause understood, *as far as their words shall be conformable to that of God* ; that they can never go beyond that, and that they cannot from thence draw any privilege of infallibility.

" As they omit nothing that may serve for their interests, so they ordinarily make use of that passage in the 18th chapter of St. Matthew, where Jesus Christ ordains that if any one receive an injury from another, he is to reprove him between himself and him alone ; and if that first complaint signifies nothing, then he must take witnesses with him ; and if he neglect to hear those witnesses, he is to tell it to the Church ; and if he neglect to hear the Church, he is to be unto us as a heathen and a publican. All that which follows in the close of that discourse of Jesus Christ shews, that he speaks there neither of faith nor worship, but of some private quarrels that we might have against our brethren, to be taken away, and of the use of that discipline. For the mind of our Lord is, that before we break off absolutely with our brethren, we should observe all the rules of charity, and that we should there make use of the Church ; but if he would refuse to hear the Church, that in that case it was allowed us to treat him no longer as a brother, but as a real stranger. Who sees not that if they would draw any thing of consequence from that passage, they ought to pretend that the Church is infallible not in matters of faith, for they are not meddled with there, but in matters of fact, and in the censures that it gives upon private quarrels, in which nevertheless all the world agrees that she may be deceived. And therefore it is that these gentlemen are wont to allege these last words, " Tell it to the Church, and if he will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as the heathens and publicans," and they allege them also as separated

from the sequel of that discourse, because otherwise they could not but observe that they would signify nothing to them.

" In fine, they produce those words of St. Paul to Timothy, " These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15. How, say they, can the Church be the pillar and ground of truth, if it is not infallible in the doctrines it proposes as of faith, and in the worship which it practises? But what likelihood is there that he would have established an opinion so important, as that of the infallibility of the Latin Church, on such metaphorical terms, which St. Paul did not make use of upon the sight of any infallibility, which should respect no other but the Latin Church in particular, and which should much rather have respected the Church of Ephesus, or the other Churches of Asia, where Timothy was then, when the Apostle wrote to him, which yet did not fail of falling into error: in terms which may be explained in divers senses, and which have been applied to divers particular bishops, without yet pretending to raise them up to be infallible; what colour, I say, is there that they can prove the infallibility of the Church of Rome? It appears in the end of that discourse of St. Paul, that he never thought of making the Church infallible, for in all that chapter, he aims at nothing else than to set down the duties of bishops and deacons; and after having marked out in particular some qualities with which they ought to be endowed, and from what vices they ought to be more especially exempt, after what manner they ought to govern themselves, he adds in the close of all, that he wrote all that to his disciple, to the end he might know how to behave himself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Who sees not that infallibility comes not in at all to the purpose in that close of the discourse? Let the bishops, says he, and the deacons take heed they be wise, sober, &c. That they hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, that their wives should be honest and faithful

in all things, that their children should be well educated, &c. And that which I say in general, I apply also to thee, Timothy, to the end thou mayest live unblameable in the house of God, in the Church of the living God. Add, according to the interpretation of these gentlemen, "which Church is infallible and cannot err;" and there is nothing of any natural connexion in it. On the contrary, that conceit of the infallibility of the Church, according to the principle that our adversaries make use of in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, would harden them in security; for let them do as they will, all would go well, and after whatsoever manner the pastors govern, the Church could never be corrupted, nor its truth be lost. Which would seem far more proper to inspire negligence into the bishops, than to animate them to their duty. In effect, if they cannot tell how to exhort men by motives of that nature, they ought then to confess the truth, to wit, that these words, *the pillar and ground of the truth*, note the end and natural design of the Church, that for which she is made, and to which she is called, which is to sustain and bear the truth, and to make it subsist in the world, and so the discourse of the Apostle appears very just, and well connected: behold, says he, after what manner the bishops ought to frame their course, and after what sort thou oughtest to live in the Church of God, in behaving thyself in it so, as remembering that God has appointed it to be the pillar and ground of his truth; live therefore in that manner that may answer that end, or that natural appointment of the Church. Just as if the King, exhorting one of the officers of his Parliament to do his duty, should tell him, That he lived in a body that was the pillar and ground of justice, and the rights of the crown; that is to say, which is naturally ordained for the maintaining justice in the state, and to defend the rights of the crown. But as that speech of the Prince would not establish any privilege of infallibility in the Parliament, so neither can that of the Apostle do it for the Church: for societies do not always follow their natural appointments; we see that they often enough depart from them. I confess that the Church does not always wander from its end, nor in

all things ; yet it cannot also be imagined that she never departs : for the wicked are mingled with the good in the same society ; the dignities of the Church are sometimes to be found more possessed by the men of the world than by the truly faithful ; the very best men themselves are subject to weaknesses, and they sometimes commit faults of that importance, that may consequently be dilated by continuance, and all that cannot but produce errors and corruptions, which it will be most necessary to reform.

"Behold all those passages of Scripture upon which, they seem to me, to found that pretension of the infallibility of the Latin Church!"—*Claude's Defence of the Reformation.* Vol. I. p. 68—73.

NOTE E. (*Page 22.*)

"THE dignity and authority of the Church of Jerusalem, indeed, was, for some time, great, as is plain from the *Acts of the Apostles*. The brethren of Antioch submitted their controversy about the obligations of the Mosaic Law to the judgment of this Church, *Acts xv.* That other Churches acted in the same way is highly probable. PAUL, though called of God to discharge the office of Apostle, was nevertheless especially careful, to approve and commend himself and his doctrine to the Apostles and Church at Jerusalem, Gal. i. 18. ii. 7, 8, 9. But the foundation of this authority was not so much in the Church of Jerusalem, which never desired pre-eminence above the rest, as in the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who presided over the Church of Jerusalem, and were by Jesus Christ appointed judges of things of a religious nature. It was the Apostles properly, not the Church of Jerusalem, whom the other Churches consulted. Although, to confess the truth, that Church itself, even when the Apostles were absent, might in doubtful cases, have been consulted, in preference to other Christian societies. For at Jerusalem many more, than in

the other Churches, were endowed with Divine illumination, and other heavenly gifts: since the Holy Spirit fell miraculously not only on the Apostles, but on all the people, who then professed the faith of Christ in that city, *Acts* ii. 1, &c. I have no doubt that equal authority belonged to the Church of Ephesus among the Asiatic Churches, while ST. JOHN lived in it; nay, I suppose that all Churches over which any of the Apostles presided for a time, abtained this honour, that from them neighbouring Churches sometimes took example both in teaching and acting. I will even go further, if any one choose, for I would not be captious: I will grant then, that to all Apostolic Churches, that is, such as the Apostles themselves had reared and instructed, this was for some time given, that, when new opinions concerning religion happened to be started, and disputes raised, they were consulted. Of this custom, many proofs may be collected from the writers of the second century. For the teachers of that age, were of opinion, and not wholly without reason, as times then were, that none should know better to think and speak of religious subjects, than those who had received instruction from the very ambassadors of Jesus Christ. Besides, since those who disseminated new opinions among the people, defended themselves by the authority of the Apostles, it seemed necessary to check their boldness, by the testimonies also of Churches which Apostles had founded. On this subject it will be sufficient to read TERTULLIAN'S Prescriptions against Heretics. Those, however, who from this fact presume, that the inequality of the ancient Churches, and the judicial power of the Apostolic ones may be proved, are very much deceived. For, not to mention, that the judicial power was ascribed, not to their Churches, but to their founders the Apostles, whose voice and discipline was thought still to live in assemblies, which they had formed; nor to remark, that as the authority and power of councils increased, the old custom of appealing to Apostolic Churches was laid aside: this whole affair was equally voluntary, as it is now-a-days, whether or not a man shall present for solution, doubts with which he is distressed, to a college of divines in some university. Never

surely will it be shown, that any law was made, for referring difficult questions to Apostolic Churches; never will it be proved, that the decisions of those Churches were regarded as oracles, and that he who might think proper to depart from them was esteemed impious. The Churches, therefore, in which Apostles had long continued, enjoyed, in early times, great respect: yet this will remain most certain, that they had no command, no power of governing the rest as they thought proper."—*Mosheim* "De rebus Christianorum," &c. Sæculum primum § 48. Cited by Mr. Ewing in his Lecture on Acts xv. Appendix. p. 98—100. See also *Vidal's Translation of Mosheim's Commentaries*, Vol. I. p. 264—265.

NOTE F. (*Page 26.*)

THIS "Exposition of the doctrines," &c. is an abridgment of Bossuet's well known work on the subject; a work singularly marked by the cautious and guarded nature of its statements, and the tone of moderation which pervades it. No one can for a moment doubt that it was the object of the writer to render Popery as like Protestantism as he possibly could, for the purpose of insinuating that the points of difference were not so great as had been generally imagined; and to induce a Protestant inquirer to concede those principles, which should involve in them the admission of the supreme and infallible authority of the Church of Rome. Hence he avails himself of the differences among the Protestants, and often attempts to refute the objections of the reformed Gallican Church against his own communion, by the arguments which *Independents* brought forward against the reformed Church. The reformed Church was on the model of the Genevese Church, and therefore *Presbyterian* in its discipline and government. Bossuet artfully reasons from the objection which an Independent would adduce against the synodical power of Presbyterianism, to invalidate the arguments of a Presbyterian

against the authority of general councils. The same mode of reasoning is frequently employed by him in his celebrated ‘Conference with Claude;’ and it is amusing to an Independent to observe the difficulty to which the Protestant advocate is sometimes reduced, by this artful method of attack. Robinson, in his Life of Claude, adverts with his characteristic freedom to this argument. He observes, in reference to Bossuet’s Exposition, that he “endeavoured so to explain the doctrines of Popery, as to prove them perfectly agreeable to those of the reformed Churches. Even moderate Papists blushed for that shameful sacrifice of truth, which this audacious disputant made for the sake of gaining proselytes. Protestants have exposed his absurdity, and refuted his sophistry a thousand times over: but, after all, there is one argument, and that the capital one, which was urged home by the prelate, and which lies unanswered to this day. The following is a true translation of his words. ‘The supreme authority of *the Church* is so necessary to determine—the sense of Scripture, that even our adversaries, after they have reprobated it as an intolerable tyranny among us, have been obliged to establish it among themselves. When Independents openly declared, that every believer ought to follow the dictates of his own conscience, without submitting to the authority of any bodies, or ecclesiastical assemblies of men, and on this principle refused to submit to the synods, that, which was held at Charenton in 1644, censured this doctrine for the same reasons, and on account of the same inconveniences, for which we reject it.’ He then goes on to shew that the synod entertained the same ideas of independency as the Church of Rome embraced. He proves from the votes of the synod, that they allowed no right of *private judgment*: but insisted under pain of excommunication, that every religious dispute should be referred to conference, from thence to consistory, thence to a provincial synod, and finally to a national synod, from which supreme court there lay no appeal. ‘Now, adds he, is not this as absolute a submission as we demand? The Independents agree to be determined by Scripture, so do you, and so do we.

Wherein then do we differ? They pretend to be determined by their own sense of Scripture: but you and we by that sense, which THE CHURCH gives it." Next he proceeds to quote the form of those letters missive, which the synod held at Vitre in 1617, had ordered to be sent by the provincial synods, by the hands of their deputies, to the national synod, conceived in these terms, "We promise before God to submit to WHATEVER SHALL BE CONCLUDED and resolved on in your holy assembly (*a tout ce qui sera conclu.*) to obey and execute it to the utmost of our power, being persuaded that God will preside among you, and will guide you by his Holy Spirit into all truth and equity, according to his word." Exactly our state, exclaims the prelate. This is an engagement to admit what the next synod should appoint, not if it should appear to you agreeable to the word of God: but if it should appear so to the SYNOD. For your parts, you reserve no right of examination. You are previously persuaded the Holy Spirit *will* preside in the assembly. The doughty champion has not yet done, he gives one push more, a home thrust it is. "The national synod of St. Foi, held in 1578, made an attempt to unite Calvinists and Lutherans in one general confession of faith. The provincial synods were required to authorise deputies to treat of, agree, and decide all points of doctrine, and other articles concerning any union. The national synod empowered four experienced ministers to conduct this business. If it were practicable, the formulary was to be sent to each synod for examination; but if the said confession of faith could not be conveniently sent to be examined by all, then, confiding in the wisdom and prudence of their deputies, they empowered them to agree and *conclude* all matters under deliberation, both articles of doctrine, and all other things tending to the union of the two Churches. Here now, says the prelate, here are four men furnished with full *power* to alter a confession of faith, which you offer to the world as a confession perfectly agreeable to the word of God, and for the maintenance of which you tell our kings, when you present it to them, an infinite multitude of you are willing to shed your blood. Pray, what does the Catholic Church

require of her members more than the *pretended* reformed require of theirs?"—*Robinson's "Life of Claude."* p. 30—33.

In reference to this argument of Bossuet, which Robinson represents as *unanswered* on Presbyterian principles, I would remark, that though the principles of the Congregational or Independent system furnish a more direct reply to it, than those of any other modification of Protestantism, it is by no means accurate to represent it as *unanswerable* by the advocates of other systems. The synods of the Reformed Churches never pretended to claim *infallibility*. They enacted certain laws and enjoined the adoption of certain principles; and this concurrence in their sentiments and views was formally embodied in resolutions, that were considered binding for the sake of order and unity. But they did not proceed to condemn all who would not subscribe to their decisions. They referred to Scripture as the *ultimate* principle of appeal. The authority was not considered as *originating* in their acts and determinations. The business was that of a voluntary compact—a mutual engagement for the great objects of agreement and co-operation among themselves, and was totally unlike the authoritative, dictatorial, and anathematising councils of the Church of Rome.

The pamphlet recommended and prefaced by the *Rev. John Lingard*, is a compilation very much in the style of the abridged exposition of Bossuet. On the various points of the controversy it takes that graduation of Protestantism that is nearest the Roman Catholic faith, and that modified representation of the Roman Catholic faith which is nearest a certain scheme of Protestant notions, and thus it supports the Roman Church by the "testimonies of Protestants." In one word, it is a support of Popery by means of *High-Church* Protestantism: and it must be confessed that the lowest degree of one scale and the highest degree of the other, are much about the same point. But the principle of such reasoning is amazingly disingenuous. It does not meet the principal arguments; it is full of equivocation; it is marked by duplicity and deceit; and an unnatural interpretation is often affixed to insulated passages which their

connection would by no means warrant. Thus for instance, the anonymous author of the tract indorsed by Mr. Lingard, entitles his second chapter “on Salvation out of the Church;” and he quotes the language of the Scotch Confession—of the Belgic Confession, and of several Protestant authors in which they assert that there is no salvation out of the Church. But an examination of the scope of their reasonings leads us to a very different conclusion from that for which they are so forcibly and violently extorted. They mean by *the Church*, not even their own communion exclusively, much less the Church of Rome; but the *whole collective body of the faithful*, which according to previous definitions of the term, constitutes the true *Catholic* or *Universal Church*. It is therefore the height of sophistry and disingenuousness to wrest these passages from Protestant authors, and call them “testimonies” in support of the Roman Catholic Church. The whole tract is in the same style. *Ex uno discit omnes, &c.*

NOTE G. (*Page 34.*)

THE miracles wrought by Jesus Christ and his disciples are strikingly different in their circumstances, and in all the proofs of their genuineness, from the wonders related in the legendary tales of the Roman Church. They were performed before enemies as well as friends; and by enemies whose inclination and interest would naturally lead them to the strictest investigation of every alleged and reported miracle. They were performed, not by a dominant party, possessing all the means and resources which a scheme of imposture might demand: but by persons in the most abject and dependent circumstances. They were not insulated and extraordinary occurrences, but performed so constantly, during the lives of the Apostles, that the right exercise and regulation of miraculous powers formed the frequent subject of admonition and exhortation. The fact of their reality

was never questioned by their enemies; but on the contrary, they attempted to account for them on the principle of *magical influence*. And it is still further worthy of notice, that *no personal interests*, and *no ecclesiastical confederacies* were promoted by these miracles. The agents gained nothing by their achievements. The only and the avowed object of their performance, was the confirmation of the claims of truth—the establishment on the ground of well-attested facts, of the divine authority of the Christian religion.

How directly contrasted with this statement, are all the accounts of Romish miracles! As proofs of the divinity of the gospel, they were unnecessary, if they were genuine; and if they were necessary, they are altogether insufficient. “It will be impossible,” says the learned author of *The Criterion*, “to assign any particular instance of a Popish miracle, the accounts of which do not labour under one or other of the following defects, which we think warrant our disbelieving them.

“First, we suspect miracles to be false when the accounts of them are not published to the world till long after the time when they are said to have been performed.

“Secondly, we suspect them to be false, when the accounts are not published in the place where it is pretended they were performed, but are propagated only at a great distance from the supposed scene of action.

“Thirdly, supposing the accounts to have the two foregoing qualifications, we still may suspect them to be false, if in the time when, and at the place where they took their rise, they might be suffered to pass without examination.”

By these *criteria* or *tests*, the learned prelate proceeds to examine the accounts of Pagan and Popish miracles; and with complete success employs them for the purpose of exposing the artifices of imposture and enthusiasm. The work abounds in curious and interesting information, blended with most convincing arguments in defence of Christian miracles, and in confutation of the pretended miracles of the Church of Rome. As the miracles of *Ignatius Loyola*, and *Francis Xavier*, are pre-

eminent, and in the estimation of the Roman Catholics, most decisive in the vindication of their exclusive claims to be considered the Church of Christ; I shall introduce Bishop Douglas' admirable disclosure of the inadequate evidence by which they are supported.

" Ignatius, according to Bouhours, Maffei, and several other writers of the order of Jesus, (for above twenty of them have been his biographers,) was not inferior to any of the saints, either for the number or the strangeness of his miracles. But that these miracles were impudently forged, long after he was dead, by an order of men remarkable for their forgeries, and with the obvious intention of extending their own power, by exalting the reputation of their founder, will, I think, be pretty evident from the following particulars :

" Ribadeneira, a Spanish jesuit, was the first who undertook to give the world a life of this saint; and that he undertook it with a view to exalt the character of the head of his order, we might have supposed, even although he had not told us so himself, when he says that he was well qualified to write the history of Ignatius, having, from his youth, been an eye witness and admirer of his most holy life. As, therefore, we cannot but suppose that Ribadeneira, a cotemporary, must have heard of Ignatius's miracles, if any had been pretended to, so it cannot be doubted, that such a biographer would have gladly laid hold of an opportunity of relating them; as the ascribing of miracles to his hero, would have advanced his reputation more than anything else that could be related of him.

" Does then Ribadeneira ascribe any miracles to Ignatius? So far is he from doing this, that we are certain, from his own declaration, not only that he himself did not believe his saint had ever performed miracles, but, farther, that this was a point universally known and agreed upon. For he enters upon an inquiry,* in his book, whence it could happen, that so holy a

* L. 5. C. xiii. p. 539. Sed dicat aliquis. si vera hæc sunt, ut profecto sunt, quid causæ est quamobrem illius sanctitas minus est testata miraculis? & ut multorum sanctorum vita, signis declarata, virtutumque operationibus insignita?

man had not the gift of miracles bestowed upon him ; and the elaborate and sensible reasons which he assigns for this, are a demonstration that it was, at that time, looked upon as an undisputed fact, that Ignatius had not been vested with any such power.

" As Ignatius died in 1557, and as Ribadeneira did not publish his life till 1572, we may be certain that the miracles ascribed to this saint, had not been invented or thought of during the first sixteen years after his death. Nay, we are certain that they were not thought of during the first thirty years : for, in 1587, Ribadeneira published a second edition of the life of Ignatius ; and though, in this edition, he tells us he has added many new particulars which he had learnt since he published the first, from some of Ignatius's most intimate friends, and other matters, which before had appeared doubtful, but in consequence of his diligent examination he now found to be certain ; yet, after all this care and diligent inquiry, the miracles of Ignatius were still unheard of by him, for this edition is as silent about them as was the first.

" This then being the case, we may well be surprised, that this same Ribadeneira should, in an abridgment of his work, printed at Ipres, in 1612, ascribe miracles to Ignatius ; telling us, as his reason for not inserting such accounts before, that though he had heard of them in 1572, they were not sufficiently authenticated at that time—But this excuse cannot serve his purpose ; for it requires more subtlety than the most subtle Jesuit is master of, to be able to reconcile his asserting that he had heard of Ignatius's miracles in 1572, with his elaborate inquiry at that very time, into the reasons why God had not vested his saint with such a power.

" From all these circumstances, therefore, I think myself authorised to conclude, that the miracles of Ignatius, which, about the year 1612, were so boldly appealed to, were impudent forgeries then trumped up, at the distance of above half a century from the age they pretend to, and when a detection of them was impossible to be set about. And why a power of miracles

should, at that time, be ascribed to this saint, is obvious. The Jesuits, now that their founder had been dead almost sixty years, began to think of getting him a place in the calendar:^{*} and that their order might not be outdone by those who could boast of a St. Francis, a St. Bernard, a St. Benedict, or a St. Dominic, they were resolved to have a Saint Ignatius at their head. That no objection, therefore, might be made to his admission into the venerable list of Demi-gods, it was thought necessary to do what other orders of religious had done before—to attribute to him a catalogue of miracles which, at such a distance of time, could not be disproved, and the evidence of which need be but slender to be allowed of by the Church, or rather the Court of Rome, whose power and grandeur are most effectually supported by its claim to miracles, under the sanction of which it is enabled to exercise a boundless empire over the understandings of its votaries.[†]

"Leaving, therefore, our military saint, our knight-errant in devotion, to enjoy, as the reward of his fanaticism, equal honours with his brethren the founders of other orders, suffer me, now, to take under my examination, the miracles ascribed to Francis Xavier, which, as they have made as much noise as, perhaps, any boasted of by papists, are very proper instances to illustrate my argument.

"I have now before me two lives of this famous saint, written (as we may easily have supposed, though we had not known it) by two fathers of his own order, by Tursellinus in Latin, and by Bouhours in French. But as the latter is little more than a transcript of the former, dressed out in a more elegant manner, I shall, in the remarks which I make on these miracles, confine myself to the account given us of them by Tursellinus. And

* This was obtained of Pope Gregory the XVth, in 1622.

† It may be observed in general, in the lives of the Romish saints, that the accounts of the miracles ascribed to them, are usually said to be extracted out of the authentic certificates, &c. exhibited during the process of their canonization. A most satisfying proof that they are forgeries of an age posterior to that they lay claim to; as few or none of their saints are canonized till they have been so long dead, as to make it easy to attribute any wonders to them without fear of contradiction.

that Xavier's miracles are inventions posterior to his time, will appear from the following circumstances:

"Tursellinus in the preface prefixed to his first edition, laments that no one had ever thought of writing this saint's life till he had been dead thirty-five years. Before any credit can be given therefore to the miracles reported of Xavier, we must be satisfied that they were publicly known during the time intervening from his death; but so far is this from being the case, that we can produce, what I look upon as most conclusive evidence, that during that time Xavier's miracles had not been heard of. The evidence I shall allege is of Acosta, who himself had been a missionary among the Indians. His work *de procurandâ Indorum salute*, was printed in the year 1589, that is above thirty-seven years after the death of Xavier, and in it we find an express acknowledgment that no miracles had ever been performed by missionaries among the Indians. For he assigns it as one reason, why the gospel was not propagated by them with the same success as it was by the apostles. "That the power of working miracles did not subsist among the missionaries, who not being able to excite the admiration or the fear of the barbarians, by the majesty of any such works, were, consequently, despised by reason of their mean appearance."*— Is it to be imagined that Acosta would have reasoned in this manner, if, at the time he wrote his book, the miracles related by Tursellinus had been ascribed to Xavier? Had such accounts been public, Acosta could not but have heard of them, as he himself was a Jesuit; and, therefore, from his silence, we may infer, unexceptionably, that between thirty and forty years had elapsed before Xavier's miracles were thought of: or, which is equally subversive of their credibility, if they were heard of within this period, that they met with no credit from one who

* Altera causa in nobis est, cur apostolica prædicatio institui omnino non possit apostolice, quod *miraculorum* nulla facultas fit:—nostrî nunc temporis cum talium operum majestate sese barbaris admirandos & timendos non præbeant, nihil restat nisi ut reliqua vitæ inopia & impotentia penitus contemnatur. B. 2. C. viii.

cannot be supposed deficient either in opportunities of information, or in readiness of believing them.

" That the miracles ascribed by Tursellinus to Xavier are posterior to the age of Xavier, may be deduced still more clearly from the testimony of the saint himself. The mission of this apostle lasted ten years ; during which time he regularly corresponded with his friends, and the superiors of his order in Europe. These letters of his have been collected, and are now in the hands of the public. As they treat principally of his mission, of the progress he made, of the difficulties he had to struggle with, and the means he made use of to convert the Indians, it came, unavoidably, in his way, to mention his power of *working* miracles, if ever he had been vested with such a power. But so far is he from giving us the least hint of this, that he mentions a circumstance which is absolutely inconsistent with the supposition. For, in many of his letters, he expresses himself greatly unable to do any good amongst those poor people, from his being ignorant of their languages, telling us that he had masters to instruct him, and frankly owning that if he could not arrive at an acquaintance with them, he could do no service to Christianity. From Xavier himself therefore, we are furnished not only with negative evidence against his having any miraculous power, but also with a positive fact, which is the strongest possible presumption against it. The end of his having a power of working miracles is supposed to be, that he might bring over the Indians to Christianity. And yet we see that he himself expressly disclaims all supernatural assistance in that very instance, in which it is reasonable to believe heaven would have assisted him, had it interposed at all ; and his not being assisted in which, rendered all other miracles, though he had performed ever so many, of no effect. For unless he could draw consequences from the miracles, unless he could explain himself to those who were witnesses of them, they would be as far from becoming Christians as ever. The Roman Catholics, indeed, think they sufficiently answer this argument drawn from the silence of

Xavier, by ascribing it to an excess of modesty. But silence in Xavier, as to his miracles, would have been as criminal as it would be in a general who gains a victory, to make no mention of it to his prince; or as it would be in an ambassador, to conceal the success of his negociation from his constituent."—*Douglas' Criterion.* p. 64—78.

NOTE H. (*Page 40.*)

IT is well known that the disputes between the *Jesuits* and the *Jansenists* were on several points, precisely the same as those, which have divided the *Arminians* and *Calvinists*, in the Protestant Churches. The history of the Church of Rome is the history of its differences and divisions. Popes have anathematised the principles of their predecessors. General Councils have enacted and decreed in direct opposition to the enactments and decrees of prior General Councils: and saints and doctors without number, have been as fierce and as furious in their contentious, as the most free-thinking heretics in the world. "The divines of the Roman Church," says Claude, "may be every day, seen to rend one another, although they all live in one and the same communion. They acknowledge one another for brethren, they assist at the same altars, they call upon the same saints, and yet nevertheless, they write one against another, after the most passionate and violent manner. One sort of them say of their adversaries, "that they were infected with heresies and were "enemies of the Apostolic See, and that their opinion was full "of perfidiousness—presumptuous, injurious to the state of the "religious, and savoured of Calvinism; and that to speak "plainly, it was erroneous in the faith, that it openly stifled the "word of God and the authority of the Fathers, that it was "blasphemous against Jesus Christ and all the saints, plainly and "evidently heretical, and contrary to the Council of Trent." The others say on the contrary—"that the propositions of their

"opponents are false, rash, presumptuous, pernicious to all the faithful, injurious to the bishops, contrary to the word of God and the authority of the councils," &c.—*Claude's Defence.* Vol. I. p. 287.

The mysticism of Madame Guion was defended by Fenelon and condemned by Bossuet. A long and violent controversy ensued. Appeals were made to the See of Rome; and after much oscillation and doubt on the part of his infallible holiness, which proved that he loved Fenelon and feared Bossuet, he, at length decided against the advocate of the devout mystic, and the pious archbishop was silenced if he was not convinced.

The proceedings of the Council of Trent, as related by Father Paul and Monsieur Jurieu, afford many singular illustrations of the management that was requisite to suit the opposite and contending parties, in the Church of Rome. One specimen shall suffice. In the year 1546, at the fifth session, under the pontificate of Paul the third, one of the principal subjects of discussion was *Predestination*, "They commissioned some divines," says Jurieu, "to make abstracts of the books of the Protestants, that they might know what propositions were to be condemned. Nothing was found in the writings of the Lutherans, but out of the books of the Zuinglians they drew eight propositions. 1. That in predestination and reprobation man has no hand, but only the will and pleasure of God. 2. That the predestinate cannot be damned, nor the reprobate saved. 3. That the elect alone are justified. 4. That the justified ought to have faith, and believe that they are predestinated. 5. That the justified cannot fall from grace. 6. That the reprobate do never receive grace. 7. That a man ought to believe that he shall persevere, when he is in grace. 8. That a justified man ought to believe that though he fall, he shall rise again."

"Most part of the divines thought, that the first proposition was very sound and catholic, to wit, that in predestination and reprobation, the will of God alone does all: that is to say, they approved absolute and gratuitous predestination, and they pretended that it was not only consonant to the judgment of St.

Thomas, but also to that of Scotus. This opinion was supported by a great number of Authorities from Holy Scripture, and the fathers, particularly St. Austin, who in his old age had vigorously maintained this absolute and free predestination: yet the election by fore-knowledge of works found its champions. The bishops of Bitonto and Sulpi put themselves at the head of the Monks, and made a party against free and absolute predestination. They said that God resolved to give all men sufficient grace, and that in the fore-knowledge of God, election and reprobation depended on the good or bad use of that sufficient grace, because God elected those whom he had fore-known would consent to and accept of that grace, and reprobated those that would reject it, they added that the contrary opinion was cruel and inhuman, that it made God unjust and an accepter of persons, and supposed him to make his choice without any reason, but out of mere fancy.

" Ambrosio Catarino, was of their opinion who grounded predestination on the fore-knowledge of works; and to avoid the force of the texts of Scripture which prove free and absolute predestination, he made use of a ridiculous medium; he made two predestinations, the one certain, effectual, and absolute without the fore-knowledge of works, saying, that predestination extended only to a small number whom God absolutely decrees to save, and for whom in order to that he prepares effectual means: to that election he applied all the passages whereby absolute predestination is proved. As for instance, those of the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where St. Paul says, that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, before either of them had done good or evil: that of one lump he makes some vessels of honour and others of dishonour; that it is neither of him that runneth, nor of him that willetteth, but God that giveth the blessing. But he added, that besides absolute predestination without fore-knowledge of works, there is another wherein God had decreed to save all those that should be converted; and that for that end he had given all men sufficient grace, to which some submit, and others do resist: and that this last election was un-

certain, unlimited, conditional, and dependent on the will and works of man ; he confessed that his opinion was contrary to that of St. Austin ; but he also said, that St. Austin's was contrary to the opinion of all others.

" The second proposition was variously censured according to the diversity of principles : and the proposition was, that the elect could not be damned, nor the reprobate saved. Catarino confessed that the elect could not be damned ; but he would not say that the reprobate could not be saved ; because God giving them sufficient grace, if they made good use of it, they might be saved. Here the Thomists flourished their distinction, *in sensu compósito & in sensu diviso*, and said, that in a sense compounded or complex, the elect could not be damned ; but in a sense divided or distinct they might. That is to say, that the elect considered under a decree of election could not be damned ; but if considered simply as men, abstractedly from that decree of election, it might be said, that they might be damned, because they might never have been elected. This distinction raised more mist before the eyes of the prelates, who were neither great philosophers nor divines, than it brought light to the question. The other six propositions were condemned by unanimous consent, particularly that which asserted the perseverance of true saints, and the inamissibility of righteousness. They alledged the examples of Saul, Solomon, Judas, and others, who had totally fallen from the real righteousness wherewith they had been invested.

" After matters were thoroughly examined, canons and decrees must pass over them. But they were in great perplexity how to do that ; every party striving to have the decrees worded in terms that might favour their opinions. Giacomo Cocco, Archbishop of Corfu, was of the mind that no opinion which could be interpreted in a sound sense, should be condemned ; and therefore he desired that all necessary exceptions and limitations should be put in the canons for removing all ambiguity. Others opposed that, saying, that if all interpretations must be inserted, it would render the canons long, tedious, and intricate. But the bishop

of Simigaglia proposed a method which was approved, and followed during the remaining time of the council. He said that there ought to be made in the first place a decree of doctrine, which should be divided into chapters; that therein the doctrine of the Church should be declared in a style and method capable to give content to all Catholics: and that then another decree ought to be made containing nothing but the canons and anathemas against heretics. The Legate Cardinal Santa Croce, applied all his pains and skill in the composing of these decrees: and laboured in it with so much success, that he gave content to all; because he worded them with so much ambiguity, that every party found their opinions therein. But this was not done without trouble; for there were above an hundred congregations as well of divines as prelates held about it, and from the beginning of September until the end of November, there past not a day wherein the cardinal did not peruse his decrees, and altering something in them. In a word, they found a means to satisfy the Scotists and the Thomists, Catarino and his adherents, who stood for the certainty that one may have of his own justification, and those that opposed it. The decrees were so artificially contrived to please all, that Dominico à Soto immediately after wrote three books, *de natura & gratia*, and found all his opinions in the decisions of the council. And nevertheless, Andreas de Vega, a famous condelier, on the other hand composed fifteen large books upon the same subject, and found all his opinions in the same decrees, though they were quite opposite to the sentiments of Soto."—*Jurieu's History of the Council of Trent*. Book II. p. 130—135.

NOTE I. (*Page 42.*)

ON the subject of *implicit faith*, Dr. Campbell has the following ingenious observations: "Religion, the Christian religion in particular, has always been understood to require faith in its

principles ; and faith in principles requires some degree of knowledge or apprehension of those principles. If total ignorance should prevail, how could men be said to believe that of which they knew nothing ? The schoolmen have devised an excellent succedaneum to supply the place of real belief, which necessarily implies, that the thing believed is, in some sort, apprehended by the understanding. This succedaneum they have denominated *implicit faith*, an ingenious method of reconciling things incompatible, to believe every thing, and to know nothing, not so much as the terms of the propositions which we believe. When the sacred lessons of the gospel were no longer addressed to the understandings of the people ; when in all the public service, they were put off with sound instead of sense, when their eyes and ears were amused, but their minds left uninstructed ; it was necessary that something should be substituted for faith, which always presupposes knowledge ; nay, that it should be something which might still be called *faith* ; for this name had been of so great renown, so long standing, and so universal use, that it was not judged safe entirely to dispossess it. Exactly such a something is *implicit faith*. The name is retained, whilst nobody is incommoded with the thing.

" The terms *implicit faith* are used in two different senses. With us Protestants, at least in this country, no more is commonly meant by them than the belief of a doctrine, into the truth of which we have made no inquiry, on the bare authority of some person or society declaring it to be true. But this always supposes, that one knows, or has some conception of the doctrine itself. All that is denoted by the term *implicit* in this acceptation is, that in lieu of evidence, one rests on the judgment of him or them by whom the tenet is affirmed. No ignorance is implied but of the proofs. But the *implicit faith* recommended by the schoolmen is quite another thing, and is constituted thus ; if you believe that all the religious principles, whatever they be, which are believed by such particular persons, are true ; those persons who hold the principles are explicit believers, you are an implicit believer of all their principles.

Nor is your belief the less efficacious, because you are ignorant of the principles themselves. Perhaps you have never heard them mentioned, or have never inquired about them. For it does not hold here as in the faith whereof the Apostle speaks, *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* In the presence of those profound doctors the schoolmen, the Apostle would be found to be no other than an arrant novice. The transcendent excellency of *implicit faith* consists in this, that you have it then in the highest perfection, when, in regard to its object, you know nothing, and have even heard nothing at all. In brief, it is neither more nor less than being a believer by proxy. Scripture saith, "Ye are saved through faith," and "without faith it is impossible to please God." Now *implicit faith* is a curious device for pleasing God, and being saved by the faith of others. It is, in fact, *imputative faith*, at least as extraordinary as the *imputative justice*, which brought so much obloquy on some of the reformers. It is as if I should call one an *implicit mathematician*, who knows not a tittle of mathematics, not even the definitions and axioms, but is convinced of the knowledge of some other person who is really, or whom he supposes to be an adept in that science.

"To believe implicitly," says Bona, "is to believe in general universally all that holy mother church believes; so as to dissent from her in nothing, nor disbelieve any of her articles. And though it be convenient (*licet opportunum sit*) for all, not only to believe all the articles implicitly, but even *some* of them, since the coming of Christ, explicitly; yet it is not necessary (*non tamen est necessarium*) for all, especially the common people, to believe them *all* explicitly. It is proper rather for those, who assume the office of teaching and preaching, as they have the cure of souls." Further, to shew the wonderful virtues and efficacy of such a faith, another of the doctors, Gabriel Byel, maintains, that, "if he who implicitly believes the Church, should think, misled by natural reason, that the Father is greater than the Son, and existed before him, or that the three persons are things locally distant from

" one another, or the like, he is not a heretic, nor sins, provided
 " he do not defend this error pertinaciously. For he believes
 " what he does believe, because he thinks that the Church be-
 " lieves so, subjecting his opinion to the faith of the Church.
 " For though his opinion be erroneous, his opinion is not his
 " faith, nay, his faith, in contradiction to his opinions, is the
 " faith of the Church. What is still more, this *implicit faith*
 " not only defends from heresy and sin, but even constitutes
 " merit in heterodoxy itself, and preserves in that merit one who
 " forms a most heterodox opinion, because he thinks the Church
 " believes so." Thus far Byel. It is then of no consequence
 what a man's explicit faith be; he may be an Arian, a Socinian,
 an Anthropomorphite, a Polytheist, in short, any thing, he cannot
 err, whilst he has an implicit faith in the Church. This they
 give as their explanation of that article of the creed, "I believe
 in the holy Catholic Church;" though, agreeably to this inter-
 pretation, there should have been no other article in the creed.
 This point alone supersedes every other, and is the quintessence
 of all." *Dr. Campbell's Lectures on Eccles. History*, Vol. II.
 p. 255—259.

NOTE K. (*Page 68.*)

Optatus Melevitanus. Lib. 5. *ad princip.*

*Vos dicitis, licet; nos, non licet: Inter vestrum licet, & nos-
 trum non licet, nutant & remigant animæ populorum. Nemo
 vobis credat, nemo nobis; omnes contentiosi homines sumus.
 Quærendi sunt judices: si Christiani, de utraque parte dari non
 possunt: de foris quærendus est Judex. Si Paganus, non potest
 nosse Christiana secreta: si Judæus, inimicus est Christiani
 Baptismatis. Ergo in terris de hac re nullum poterit reperiri
 judicium: de cœlo quærendus est judex. Sed quid pulsamus
 cœlum, cum habeamus hic in evangelio testamentum? Quia hoc
 loco recte possunt terrena cœlestibus comparari; tale est, quod*

quivis hominum habens numerosos filios: his quamdiu præsens est, ipse imperat singulis, non est adhuc necessarium testamentum. Sic et Christus, quamdiu præsens in terris fuit (quamvis nec modo desit) pro tempore quicquid necessarium erat, Apostolis imperavit. Sed quo modo terrenus pater, cum se in confilio senserit mortis, timens ne post mortem suam erupta pace litigent fratres, exhibitis testibus voluntatem suam de pectore morituro transfert in tabulas duraturas; et si fuerit inter fratres contentio nata, non itur ad tumulum, sed queritur testamentum, et qui in tumulo quiescit, tacitus de tabulis loquitur vivus. Is, cuius est testamentum, in cœlo est: Ergo voluntas ejus velut in testamento, sic in evangelio inquiratur.

That is, “ You say such a thing is *lawful*: we say it is *unlawful*: the minds of the people are doubtful and wavering between your *lawful* and our *unlawful*. Let no man believe either *you*, or *us*; we are all contentious men. We must seek therefore for judges between us. If Christians are to be our judges, both sides will not afford such. We must seek for a judge abroad. If he be a *Pagan*, he cannot know the secrets of Christianity: if he be a *Jew*, he is an enemy to Christian baptism. Therefore there is no judgment of this matter can be found on earth. We must seek for a judge from heaven. But to what end do we solicit heaven, when we have here in the gospel a will and testament? And because here we may fitly compare earthly things with heavenly; the case is just as if a man had many sons: while he is present with them, he commands every one what he will have done; and there is no need as yet of making his last will. So also Christ, as long as he was present on earth (though neither now is he wanting) for a time commanded his Apostles whatsoever was necessary. But just as an earthly father, when he feels his death approaching, fearing lest after his death the brothers should fall out and quarrel, calls in witnesses, and translates his will from his dying heart into written tables, that will continue long after him: Now if any controversy arises among the brothers, they do not go to his tomb, but consult his last will; and thus he,

" while he rests in his grave, does speak to them in those silent tables, as if he were alive. He, whose Testament we have, "is in heaven; therefore we are to inquire his pleasure in the "gospel, as in his last Will and Testament."

" It is plain from hence," says Chillingworth, " that he knew not of any living, speaking, audible Judge, furnished with authority and infallibility to decide this controversy. Had he known any such assisted with the Spirit of God for this purpose, it had been horrible impiety against God and the Church's peace to say there was none such; or the Spirit of God was not able by his assistance to keep this Judge from being hindered with partiality, from seeing the truth. Had he thought the Bishop of Rome speaking *ex cathedra* to be his Judge, now had been the time to have said so; but he says directly the contrary, and therefore it is plain he knew of no such authority he had."

" Neither is there the like reason for a Judge, finally, and with authority to determine controversies in religion, as in civil differences; for if the controversy be about *mine* and *thine*, about land or money or any other thing, it is impossible that both I and my adversary should hold the possession of it; and one of us must do injury to the other. But in matters of doctrine I may hold my opinion, and do my adversary no wrong; and my adversary may hold his and do me none."—CHILLINGWORTH'S *Works*, (*Discourses*) p. 145—146.

NOTE L. (*Page 91.*)

" That our Lord really referred to *this declaration of Peter*, relating to his own *divine dignity*, as being the true *rock*, *on which he would build his Church*, is established beyond contradiction by our Lord himself, in the clear distinction which he maintained between the stone (*πετρος petros*) and the *rock*, (*πετρα petra*) by the accurate grammatical terms in which both these words are expressly *recorded*. (For whatsoever may have

been the language in which they were really *spoken*, perhaps in *Chaldee* or *Syriac*, yet in this point the *Greek record* is our only authoritative instructor.) The first word, $\pi\tau\rho\sigma$ being a *mascu-line* noun, signifies merely a *stone*; and the second word $\pi\tau\rho\alpha$ though it is a *feminine* noun, cannot signify any thing of less magnitude and importance than a *rock*, or strong mountain of defence. The true *meaning* of the name was at first declared by our Lord to be Cephas, a *stone*: and a learned commentator, Edward Leigh, Esq. asserts, that $\pi\tau\rho\sigma$ doth *always signify a stone*, *never a rock*. *Critica Sacra*, p. 325.

"With respect to the first—The word $\pi\tau\rho\sigma$, *petros*, in its highest figurative sense of a *stone*, when applied to *Peter*, can represent only *one* true believer, or faithful member of Christ's Church; that is, *one* out of the great multitude of true believers in Christ, who, as *figurative stones*, form altogether the glorious spiritual building of Christ's Church, and *not* the *foundation* on which that Church is built; because the figurative character cannot, consistently with truth, be applied to any other person than to *God* or to *Christ alone*. And though even Christ himself is sometimes, in Holy Scripture, called a *stone*, ($\lambda\theta\sigma$, but not $\pi\tau\rho\sigma$) yet whenever this figurative expression is applied to him, it is always with such a clear distinction of *superiority* over all other *figurative stones*, as will not admit the least idea of any *vicarial stone* to be substituted in his place; as, for instance; He is called 'the head stone of the corner,' (Psal. cxviii. 22.)—'in Zion a precious corner stone,' (Isa. xxviii. 16.) by whom alone the other *living stones* of the *spiritual house* are rendered 'acceptable to God'; as St. Peter himself (previous to his citation of that text of Isaiah) has clearly declared in his address to the Churches, dispersed throughout *Pontus*, *Galacia*, *Cappadocia*, *Asia*, and *Bithynia*; wherein he manifestly explains that very text of Isaiah, as follows:—'Ye also' (says the Apostle) 'as *living stones*, are built up a *spiritual house*, a *holy priesthood*, to offer up *spiritual sacrifices*, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, BY (or through) JESUS CHRIST,' (1 Pet. ii. 5.) Thus plainly acknowledging the *true foundation*, on which the other *living stones* of the

primitive *Catholic Church* were built, in order to render them ‘*acceptable to God*,’ as ‘*a holy priesthood*.’

“ And the Apostle then proceeds (in the very next verse) to his citation of the above-mentioned text from Isaiah—‘ *Wherefore also*’ (says he, ver. 6.) ‘ it is contained in the Scripture, *Behold, I lay in Sion a CHIEF CORNER STONE, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him, (επ' αυτῷ, on him, that is, on Jesus Christ, the only CHIEF CORNER STONE), shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, which believe,*’ (he) ‘ *IS PRECIOUS;*’ (or, *an honour*; as rendered in the margin); ‘ *but unto them, which be disobedient;*’ (he is, δε, also) ‘ *the stone which the builders disallowed, the same, (οὐραց, for there is no other person that can be entitled to this supreme distinction in the Church) is made the HEAD OF THE CORNER.*’

“ And a due consideration also of the second noun, πετρα, *a rock*, will produce exactly the same effect; that is, it will demonstrate that the supreme title of the *rock*, which, in other texts of Holy Scripture, is applied to *Jehovah*, or *God*, alone, (as I have already shewn) most certainly was not intended by our Lord to be understood as applicable to his disciple *Peter*; but only to that true testimony, which St. Peter had just before declared, concerning the divine dignity of the Messiah—‘ *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*’

“ I have already remarked, that πετρα, (a rock) is a *feminine* noun; and a clear distinction is maintained between πετρος, the *masculine* noun in this text, and the said *feminine* noun πετρα, the *rock*, by the grammatical terms in which the latter, in its *relatives and articles*, is expressed, which are all regularly *feminine* throughout the whole sentence; and thereby they demonstrate that our Lord did *not* intend that the new *appellation*, or nominal distinction, which he had just before given to Simon, (viz. πετρος, the *masculine* noun in the beginning of the sentence) should be construed as the character of which he spoke in the next part of the sentence; for, if he had really intended that construction, the same *masculine* noun, must necessarily have been repeated in the next part of the sentence with a *masculine*

pronoun, wherein, on the contrary, not only the gender is changed from the *masculine* to the *feminine*, but also the figurative character itself, which is as much superior, in dignity, to the apostle Simon, and also to his new appellative πετρος, as a *rock* is superior to a mere *stone*. For the word πετρος cannot signify any thing more than a *stone*; so that the Popish application to *Peter* as the *foundation of Christ's Church*, is not only inconsistent with the real meaning of the appellative, which Christ, at that very time, conferred upon him, and with the necessary grammatical construction of it, but also with the figurative importance of the other word, the *rock*; ‘*upon this rock*,’ the declared foundation of the Church, a title of dignity, which (as I have already shewn by several texts of Scripture) is applicable only to *God*, or to *Christ*.

“ And be pleased to observe further, that the application of this supreme title (the *rock*) to Peter, is inconsistent (above all) with the plain *reference to the preceding CONTEXT*, made by our Lord in the beginning of this very verse—‘ *AND I ALSO say unto thee*’—which manifestly points out (both by the copulative ‘*and*,’ and the connective adverb ‘*also*’) the inseparable connection of this verse with the previous declaration of Peter, concerning our Lord’s divine dignity in the preceding sentence—‘ *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*’—and thereby demonstrates that our Lord’s immediate reply (‘*AND I ALSO SAY unto thee*, &c.) did necessarily include this declaration of *Peter*, as being the principal object of the sentence—the true *foundation or rock*, on which alone the *Catholic Church* can be properly built; because our *faith in Christ* (that he is truly ‘*the Son of the living God*,) is unquestionably the only security, or *rock*, of our salvation.—*Remarks on Matt. xvi. 18.* by *Granville Sharp, Esq.* Cited by *Dr. Adam Clarke* in his *Commentary*.

NOTE M. (*Page 101.*)

It is the opinion of Bishop Horsley that the whole of this passage in Matthew refers exclusively to St. Peter and to his personal prerogatives above the rest of the Apostles. Hence the learned prelate considers the subsequent grant of the power of "binding and loosing," to the other Apostles, of which we have an account in Matt. xviii. 18. as respecting merely the power of exercising discipline in the Church, which he views as the special property of the priesthood in all ages. It is obvious however that he assumes that a different interpretation must be given of the phrase *to bind* and *to loose* in one passage from what it possesses in the other. As applied to Peter he considers it as meaning authoritatively to declare what was binding and what was abrogated; as applied to the other Apostles, he confines it to the administration of discipline. In the one case it is made to refer to *institutions*, and in the other, to *persons*. Now for this distinction there is no proof whatever adduced by the Bishop; and if the reasons be valid in support of the first interpretation, the same interpretation should be given of the phrase in the other passage. There is no difficulty in harmonising these passages. The power of "binding and loosing" was first given to St. Peter, and then to all the disciples as their common property; and the history of the Acts of the Apostles proves that they exercised it *together*. It is however worthy of observation, that the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" were NOT given to the rest of the Apostles. Only *one* disciple could *first* preach to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and in this the true primacy of St. Peter consisted. Here and here only, he was alone.

NOTE N. (*Page 120.*)

With respect to the election of *Matthias* to fill the vacant office in the Apostleship, I fully agree with the opinion of

M'Knight; and I conceive it derives no small confirmation from the circumstance, that St. John describes the Church as “having twelve foundations, and in them, the names of the *twelve Apostles of the Lamb.*” (Rev. xxi. 14.) If Matthias were one of the Apostles in the peculiar sense of the term, then, after Paul’s conversion, there were *thirteen* Apostles. “No man nor body of men,” says *M'Knight*, “could, by *their designation*, confer an office, whose authority bound the consciences of all men, and whose duties could not be performed without the gifts of inspiration and miracles. To *ordain an Apostle* belonged to Christ alone, who, with the appointment, could also give the supernatural powers necessary to the function. Some time, therefore, after the election of Matthias, Jesus himself seems to have superseded it, by appointing another to be his apostle and witness in the place of Judas. In the choice of this new Apostle, Jesus had a view to the conversion of the Gentiles: which, of all the services allotted to the Apostles, was the most dangerous and difficult. For the person engaged in that work had to contend with the heathen priests, whose office and gains being annihilated by the spreading of the gospel, it was to be expected that they would oppose its preachers with an extreme rage. He had to contend, likewise, with the unbelieving Jews living in the heathen countries, who would not fail to inflame the idolatrous multitude against any one who should preach salvation to the Gentiles, without requiring them to obey the law of Moses. The philosophers too were to be encountered, who, no doubt, after their manner, would endeavour to overthrow the gospel by argument; whilst the magistrates and priests laboured to destroy it, by persecuting its preachers and abettors. The difficulty and danger of preaching to the Gentiles being so great, the person who engaged in it certainly needed an uncommon strength of mind, a great degree of religious zeal, a courage superior to every danger, and a patience of labour and suffering not to be exhausted, together with much prudence, to enable to avoid giving just offence to unbelievers. Besides these natural talents, education and literature were necessary in the person who attempted to convert

the Gentiles, that he might acquit himself with propriety, when called before kings and magistrates, and men of learning. All these talents and advantages *Saul of Tarsus* possessed in an eminent degree: and being a violent persecutor of the Christians, his testimony to the resurrection of Jesus would have the greater weight when he became a preacher of the gospel. Him, therefore, the Lord Jesus determined to make his Apostle in the room of Judas: and, for that purpose, he appeared to him from heaven, as he journeyed to Damascus, to persecute his disciples. And having convinced him of the truth of his resurrection, by thus appearing to him in person, he commissioned him to preach his resurrection to the Gentiles, together with the doctrines of the gospel, which were to be made known to him afterwards by revelation: saying to him, *Acts xxvi. 16.* *I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness, &c.* Such was the commission which Jesus in person gave to *Saul of Tarsus*, who afterwards was called *Paul*: so that, although he had not attended Jesus during his ministry, he was, in respect both of his election to the office, and of his fitness for it, rightly numbered with the Apostles.”—*M'Knight's Prelim. Essays.* Vol. I. p. 58, 59.

NOTE O. (*Page 122.*)

“ Every one knows the divisions of the fourteenth century, which divided all the West about the occurrence of two anti-popes. Both parties were extremely animated, they looked upon one another as excommunicated, as anti-christs, the enemies of God and his Church; they mutually anathematized one another; they took up arms one against another, and made a bloody war. Urban VI. on his side, in a bull that began, “ The vine

of the Lord of Sabaoth, that is to say, the holy Church of Rome, has a great evil in her womb, and sends forth grievous sighs," &c. treats his anti-pope and his cardinals as children of iniquity and sons of perdition, vipers, wicked wretches animated with the spirit of the devil, schismatics, apostates, conspirators, blasphemers, &c. He deposed, and spoiled them of all their honours, dignities, prelacies, offices and benefits ; he confiscated their goods, and declared their persons to be infamous and detestable ; he excommunicated all those who believed, who received them, their defenders and favourers, and even those who should give them ecclesiastical burial, if they did not pull them out of the grave again with their own hands ; he forbade all faithful people of what quality soever, even kings themselves, queens, emperors, to receive them into their lands, to give or to send them either bread, or wine, or meat, or wood, or money, or merchandise.

" He excommunicated particularly all those who should hold his competitor, for Pope, or who should call him Pope, or who should receive any favours, indulgences, dignities, or prelacies from him. And as if all this had not been enough, he ordained a holy crusade against those schismatics and those condemned persons, to pursue and root them out, under the same privileges which are given to those who take up arms for the conquest of the holy land.

" He absolved also the subjects of those princes who should acknowledge his anti-pope, of their oath of allegiance, and he excommunicated those subjects themselves if they should yield any obedience to their sovereigns. On the other side, Clement VII. who kept his seat at Avignon, was not wanting to proceed against Urban and his followers, and to treat him and his party with the same heat that Urban had shewed against him. See here differences which were methinks sufficiently heightened. Notwithstanding whatsoever animosity there was there between those two parties, whatsoever wars they made one against another, whatsoever anathemas they mutually thundered out, the Church of Rome has not failed to own and canonize for saints those persons who lived and died in those two contrary obedi-

ences, and who even died in the hottest quarrels of those two anti-popes. For she has canonized on the one side St. Catherine of Sienna, who took part with Urban, and who treated his competitor as anti-christ, and a member of the devil, and his cardinals as devils incarnate; and on the other side, she has canonized Peter of Luxemburg, who died the cardinal of Clement VII. and who had received that dignity from his hands, against the express prohibition of Urban VI. under the pain of excommunication; so that here are two saints on the one and the other side lawfully excommunicated."—*Claude's Defence*, Vol. I. p. 283—285.

NOTE P. (*Page 147.*)

A modern defender of the Roman Catholic faith, after quoting the decree of the Council of Trent respecting the *communion of each kind*, gives the following explanation of the unauthorised prohibition of the cup to the laity. I cite it as a specimen of special pleading, and an illustration of the way in which the authority of the Scriptures is set aside by the self-constituted authority of the Church of Rome. "It is admitted," says the author of "*the Faith of Catholics*"—"that, from the earliest time, down to the twelfth century, the faithful of both sexes, laity as well as clergy, when they assisted at the public and solemn celebration of the Christian service, were admitted to communion, generally received under both kinds. But, during the same period, there seems never to have been any positive ecclesiastical precept so to do; for to infants, we often read, the communion was given sometimes under one kind, sometimes under another:—in times of persecution, or under difficulties, or when long journeys were undertaken, the consecrated bread was permitted to be carried away—the same was taken to the sick—where there was a repugnance to the taste of wine, the bread also was alone given. It may then, it seems, be said, that, unless on public and solemn occasions, the faithful, in the times of which we are speaking,

communicated under one kind alone: while the priesthood, to whom the command of Christ—*Do this in remembrance of me*; Luke xxii.—we believe, solely applies, and when employed in the duty of their sacred function, received under both. The completion of the mysterious institution demanded this.

“But many abuses and accidents, through carelessness or in-caution happening in distribution of the consecrated wine; and the use of the bread alone, on so many occasions, being permitted; and the belief, that Christ was wholly present under each species, [authorising the practice; the primitive rite gradually subsided, and communion in one kind very generally prevailed. The rulers of the Church, meanwhile, promoted rather than obstructed the change. And so things continued—no ecclesiastical law intervening—till the followers of John Huss, in Bohemia, tumultuously contending, that the use of the cup was absolutely necessary, the Council of Constance, which opened in 1414, finally decreed, that, “as the body and blood of Christ were wholly contained under each species, the custom, introduced on rational grounds, and long observed in the Church of communicating in one kind, should be received as a law, which no one, without the authority of the Church, might reject or alter.” Sess. xiii. Conc. Gen. T. xii. p. 100—So just is the observation, that, as circumstances and the manners of men change—where change, under due authority, as in discipline, may be permitted—practices, once good and laudible, should change with them.”

Faith of Catholics, p. 246—248.

NOTE Q. (*Page 155.*)

The word *transubstantiation* obtained the sanction of Papal authority in the thirteenth century, at the first Lateran Council, held in the year 1215 by innocent III. At this Council there were 412 Bishops, nearly 800 Abbots and Priors, and Ambas-

sadors from almost every court in Christendom. The Pontiff, without condescending to enter into any consultation, produced seventy canons already prepared, which were read to the assembly, who submissively subscribed the decrees, in which, however, they had the consolation to find their own powers extended and confirmed. The first canon contained a confession of faith, in which the opinion still maintained by the Romish Church respecting the Eucharist was pronounced by Innocent, to be the only true and orthodox account of the Lord's Supper; and he had the honour of establishing the use of the word *transubstantiation*, which had been before almost unknown. (See *Gregory and Mosheim.*)

"I shall shew," says Archbishop Tillotson, "by plain testimonies of the fathers in several ages, for above five hundred years after Christ, that this doctrine was not the belief of the ancient Christian church. I deny not but that the fathers do, and that with great reason, very much magnify the wonderful mystery and efficacy of this sacrament, and frequently speak of a great supernatural change made by the divine benediction. They say indeed, that the elements of bread and wine do by the divine blessing become to us the body and blood of Christ: but they likewise say, that the names of the things signified are given to the signs; that the bread and wine do still remain in their proper nature and substance, and they are turned into the substance of our bodies; that the body of Christ in the sacrament is not the natural body, but the sign and figure of it; not that body which was crucified, nor that blood which was shed upon the cross; and that it is impious to understand the *eating of the flesh of the Son of man, and drinking his blood*, literally; all which are directly opposite to the doctrine of transubstantiation, and utterly inconsistent with it. I will select but some few testimonies of many things which I might bring to this purpose.

"I begin with Justin Martyr, who says expressly, (*apol. 2. p. 98. edit. Paris, 1636,*) that our blood and flesh are nourished by the conversion of that food which we receive in the eucharist:

but that cannot be the natural body and blood of Christ; for no man will say that that is converted into the nourishment of our bodies.

" The second is Irenæus, who, speaking of this sacrament, (*lib. 4. c. 35.*) says, "that the bread which is from the earth, " receiving the divine invocation, is now no longer common " bread, but the eucharist, (or sacrament) consisting of two " things, the one earthly, the other heavenly." He says it is no longer common bread; but, after invocation or consecration, it becomes the sacrament, that is, bread sanctified, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly; the earthly thing is bread, and the heavenly is the divine blessing, which by the invocation or consecration is added to it. And elsewhere, (*lib. 5. c. 28.*) he hath this passage, " When therefore the cup that is mixed " (that is, of wine and water) and the bread that is broken re- " ceives the word of God, it becomes the eucharist of the blood " and body of Christ, of which the substance of our flesh is in- " creased and consists." But if that which we receive in the sacrament do nourish our bodies, it must be bread and wine, and not the natural body and blood of Christ. There is another remarkable testimony of Irenæus, which though it be not now extant in those works of his which remain, yet hath been preserved by Oecumenius, (*comment. in 1 Pet. c. 3.*) and it is this, " When (says he) the Greeks had taken some servants of the " Christian catecumeni, (that is, such as had not been admitted " to the sacrament) and afterwards urged them by violence to " tell them some of the secrets of the Christians, these servants " having nothing to say that might gratify those who offered vio- " lence to them, except only that they had heard from their " masters that the divine communion was the blood and body of " Christ, they thinking that it was really blood and flesh, de- " clared as much to those that questioned them. The Greeks " taking this as if it were really done by the Christians, disco- " vered it to others of the Greeks; who hereupon put Sanctus " and Blandina to the torture, to make them confess it. To " whom Blandina boldly answered, how could they endure to do

“this, who by way of exercise (or abstinence) do not eat that flesh which may lawfully be eaten?” By which it appears, that this which they would have charged upon Christians, as if they had literally eaten the flesh and blood of Christ in the sacrament, was a false accusation which these martyrs denied, saying they were so far from that, that they for their part did not eat any flesh at all.

“The next is Tertullian, who proves against Marcion the heretic, (l. 4. p. 571. edit. Paris Rigal. 1634.) that the body of our Saviour was not a mere phantasm and appearance, but a real body, because the sacrament is a figure and image of his body; and if there be an image of his body, he must have a real body, otherwise the sacrament would be an image of an image. His words are these, “The bread which our Saviour took and distributed to his disciples, he made his own body, saying, *This is my body*; that is, *the image or figure of my body*. But it could not have been the figure of his body, if there had not been a true and real body.” And, arguing against the sceptics, who denied the certainty of sense, he useth this argument, that if we question our senses, we may doubt whether our blessed Saviour were not deceived in what he heard, and saw, and touched. “He might, (says he, *lib. de anima*, p. 319.) be deceived in the voice from heaven, in the smell of the ointment with which he was anointed against his burial, and in the taste of the wine which he consecrated in remembrance of his blood.” So that it seems we are to trust our senses, even in the matter of the sacrament; and if that be true, the doctrine of transubstantiation is certainly false.

“Origen, in his comment on Matt. xv. (edit. Huetii.) speaking of the sacrament, hath this passage, “That food which is sanctified by the word of God and prayer, as to that of it which is material, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught;” which none will surely say of the body of Christ. And afterwards he adds, by way of explication, “It is not the matter of the bread, but the words which are spoken over it, which profiteth him that worthily eateth the Lord. And this

" (he says) he hath spoken concerning the typical and symbolical body." So that the matter of bread remaineth in the sacrament; and this Origen calls the typical and symbolical body of Christ. And it is not the natural body of Christ which is there eaten; for the food eaten in the sacrament, as to that of it which is material, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught. This testimony is so very plain in the cause, that Sixtus Senensis suspects this place of Origen was depraved by the heretics. / Cardinal Perron is contented to allow it to be Origen's: but rejects his testimony, because he was accused of heresy by some of the fathers; and says he talks like a heretic in this place. So that with much ado this testimony is yielded to us. The same father, in his homilies upon Leviticus, speaks thus, (cap. 10.) " There is also in the New Testament a letter which kills him who doth not spiritually understand those things which are said; for if we take according to the letter that which is said, EXCEPT YE EAT MY FLESH, AND DRINK MY BLOOD, this letter kills." And this is also a killing testimony, and not to be answered but in Cardinal Perron's way, by saying, " He talks like a heretic."

" St. Cyprian hath a whole epistle (63.) to Cecilius, against those who gave the communion in water only, without wine mingled with it; and his main argument against them is this; that the blood of Christ with which we are redeemed and quickened, cannot seem to be in the cup, when there is no wine in the cup by which the blood of Christ is represented;" and afterwards he says, that, " contrary to the evangelical and apostolical doctrine, water was in some places offered (or given) in the Lord's cup, which (says he) alone cannot express (or represent) the blood of Christ." And lastly, he tells us, that " by water the people is understood, by wine the blood of Christ is shewn (or represented); but when in the cup water is mingled with wine, the people is united to Christ." So that, according to this argument, wine in the sacramental cup is no otherwise changed into the blood of Christ, than the water mixed with it is changed into the people, which are said to be united to Christ.

"I omit many others, and pass to St. Austin, in the fourth age after Christ. - And I rather insist upon his testimony, because of his eminent esteem and authority in the Latin Church; and he also calls the elements of the sacrament "figure and sign of "Christ's body and blood." In his book against Adamantus the Manichee, we have this expression, (tom. 6. p. 187. edit. Basil. 1596.) "Our Lord did not doubt to say, *This is my body*, when he gave the sign of his body." And in his explication of the third psalm, speaking of Judas, whom our Lord admitted to his last supper, "in which (says he) enarrat. in Ps. tom. 8. p. "16.) he recommended and delivered to his disciples the figure "of his body;" language which would now be censured for heresy in the Church of Rome. Indeed he was never accused of heresy, as Cardinal Perron says Origen was, but he talks as like one as Origen himself. And in his comment on the 98th Psalm, speaking of the offence which the disciples took at that saying of the Saviour, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, &c.* he brings in our Saviour speaking thus to them, (id. tom. 9. p. 1105.) "Ye must understand spiritually what I "have said unto you. Ye are not to eat this body which ye see, "and to drink that blood which shall be shed by those that shall "crucify me. I have commended a certain sacrament to you, "which being spiritually understood, will give you life." What more opposite to the doctrine of transubstantiation, than that the disciples were not to eat that body of Christ which they saw, nor to drink that blood which was shed upon the cross; but that all this was to be understood spiritually, and according to the nature of a sacrament? For that body, he tells us, is not here but in heaven, in his comment upon these words, *Me ye have not always.* "He speaks, (says he, in. tract. 50. in Joan.) of the presence of his body: "Ye shall have me according to my pro- "vidence, according to my majesty and invisible grace; but ac- "cording to the flesh which the Word assumed, according to that "which was born of the Virgin Mary, ye shall not have me. "Therefore, because he conversed with his disciples forty days, "he is ascended up into heaven, and is not here."

" In the 23d epistle, (id. tom. 2. p. 94.) "If the sacrament
" (says he) had not some resemblance of those things whereof
" they are sacraments, they would not be sacraments at all: but
" from this resemblance they take for the most part the names of
" the things which they represent. Therefore as the sacrament
" of the body of Christ is in some manner or sense Christ's body,
" and the sacrament of his blood is the blood of Christ; so the
" sacrament of faith (meaning baptism) is faith." Upon which
words of St. Austin, there is this remarkable gloss in their
own canon law, (de consecrat. dist. 2. Hoc est.) " The hea-
" venly sacrament, which truly represents the flesh of Christ, is
" called the body of Christ, but improperly. Whence it is said
" after a manner, but not according to the truth of the thing, but
" the mystery of the thing signified; so that the meaning is, it is
" called the body of Christ, that is, it signifies the body of
" Christ." And if this be St. Austin's meaning, I am sure no
Protestant can speak more plainly against transubstantiation.
And in the ancient canon of the mass, before it was changed, in
compliance with this new doctrine, it is expressly called *a sacrament, a sign, an image, and a figure of Christ's body*. To which
I will add that remarkable passage of St Austin, cited by Gratian,
(de consecrat. dist. 2. sect. Utrum) "That as we receive the
" similitude of his death in baptism, so we may also receive the
" likeness of his flesh and blood, that so neither may truth be
" wanting in the sacrament, nor Pagans have occasion to make
" us ridiculous for drinking the blood of one that was slain."

" I will mention but one testimony more of this father, but so
clear a one as it is impossible any man in his wits that had believed
transubstantiation, could have uttered. It is in his treatise *De
doctrina Christiana* (lib. 3. p. 53.) where, laying down several
rules for the right understanding of scripture, he gives this for
one, " If (says he) the speech be a precept forbidding some hei-
" nous wickedness or crime, or commanding us to do good, it is
" not figurative; but if it seem to command any heinous wicked-
" ness or crime, or to forbid that which is profitable or benefi-
" cial to others, it is figurative. For example: *Except ye eat*

"the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you; this seems to command a heinous wickedness and crime; therefore it is a figure, commanding us to communicate of the passion of our Lord, and, with delight and advantage, "to lay up in our memory that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us." So that according to St. Austin's best skill in interpreting the scripture, the literal eating of the flesh of Christ, and drinking his blood, would have been a great impiety; and therefore the expression is to be understood figuratively: not as Cardinal Perron would have it, only in opposition to the eating of his flesh and blood in the gross appearance of flesh and blood, but to the real eating of his natural body and blood under any appearance whatsoever. For St. Austin doth not say, this is a figurative speech, wherein we are commanded really to feed upon the natural body and blood of Christ under the species of bread and wine, as the Cardinal would understand him; for the speech would be literal and not figurative: but he says, this is a figurative speech, wherein we are commanded spiritually to feed upon the remembrance of his passion.—*Tillotson's Works*, Vol. II. p. 103—109.

NOTE R. (*Page 176.*)

The Jesuits are "a sect every where spoken against." In some circumstances, an exposure to general opposition, might excite a presumption in favour of those who are its objects; but in the present case, the antipathy is supported by its universality, and will we doubt not, maintain its influence, even in spite of all the edicts of an infallible and infatuated pontiff, to counteract it. Nor can this antipathy be reasonably diminished, by the concession, that the Jesuits have not been altogether without their uses in the great process of national improvement. Most unquestionably, many advantages were derived, during the existence of their order from their successful efforts, in the promotion of literature

and science; and in some instances their secular institutions abroad might contribute to the improvement of social order, where the principles of legislation were unknown, and the incipient state of civilisation might give to their plans, the appearance of humanity. But even in this most splendid department of their operations, it was artful policy and not the principle of benevolence, that formed their establishments, and guided the movements of their complicated machinery.

The avowed object of Jesuitism, as a distinct order in the Roman Catholic Church, is the support of the Papal Supremacy. The order, as is well known, originated in the enthusiasm and ambition of *Ignatius Loyola*. Loyola had devoted his youth to the military profession, and signalised himself by his valour at the siege of Pampeluna, in the year 1521. While under a course of medical treatment, owing to a wound he received at the siege, *The Lives of the Saints* became the subject of his perusal. At once a new direction was given to the thoughts and purposes of his aspiring mind; nor could the change of his profession be deemed at all incongenial with his former habits; for it was truly a *militant* Church to whose service he resolved to devote himself. It was a mere transfer of his adventurous and enterprising genius, and required neither an intellectual nor a moral revolution. He became the knight of the blessed virgin; performed a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; and on his return to Europe went through a course of theological studies in the universities of Spain. After this Paris became the scene of his operations. In that prolific soil, where “all monstrous, all prodigious things” have abounded in every age, he planted the tree, like another tree since planted there, whose deadly shade extended to other regions and the leaves of which, were *not* for the healing of nations! He presented the institutes of a new order to Pope Paul III. The Pope referred the examination of the institutes to a committee of cardinals. They represented the establishment to be unnecessary as well as dangerous, and Paul refused to grant his approbation of it. At last Loyola removed all his scruples by an offer, which it was impossible for any Pope to resist. He proposed that, be-

sides the three vows of poverty, of chastity, and monastic obedience, which are common to all orders of the regulars, the members of his society should take a fourth vow of *unconditional obedience to the Pope, binding themselves to go whithersoever he should command for the service of religion, and without requiring any thing from the Holy See for their support.* We may naturally conclude, that the objects and policy of such an institution must have been *prima facie*, bad indeed, if such a conclave rejected it. But no sooner was this additional vow proposed, than all the evil was at once neutralised; and “necessity—

“The tyrant's plea, excus'd the devilish deeds!”

The circumstances attending the origin of the Jesuitical order, furnish a striking illustration of the character and genius of popery at the time of its institution. The papal authority had just received a tremendous shock by the revolt of several nations from the Romish Church. It was the æra of the Reformation. The eloquence and courage of Luther, the acuteness and learning of Calvin, the persuasive reasonings of Melanchton, the manly independence of Zuinglius, and the fearless hardihood of Knox, had concurred with various political changes in some of the most powerful nations of Europe, to establish and support the Protestant cause. There had been a developement of that mystery of iniquity at which the world had long wondered. Its rapacity and tyranny were disclosed, the thunders of the Vatican were no longer dreaded as they had formerly been; and the flash of ecclesiastical vengeance which preceded, often passed by disregarded and innoxious.—It was natural for such a change then beginning to be effected, to excite the alarm of the friends and supporters of the Romish hierarchy. When the new order of Ignatius was first contemplated, it was regarded merely as the ambitious project of an individual who aimed only at his own aggrandisement; and for aught the penetration of an infallible committee could discern to the contrary, it might have been another conspiracy against the papal chair. But mark the changing aspect of the Pontiff and his subalterns, as soon as *implicit, unconditional obedience* to his holiness henceforward and for ever, became the profession of the

order. Paul perceiving this, confirmed the institution of the Jesuits by his bull in 1540—granted the most ample privileges to the members of the society, and appointed Loyola to be the first general of the order. The event fully justified his discernment, in expecting such beneficial consequences to the See of Rome from this institution. In less than half a century, the society obtained establishments in every country that adhered to the Roman Catholic Church; its power and wealth increased amazingly; the number of its members became great; their character as well as accomplishments were still greater; and the Jesuits were celebrated by the friends and dreaded by the enemies of the Romish faith, as the most able and enterprising order in the Church. Their future proceedings, however, soon developed the principles and objects of their institute. To promote the interests of the See of Rome, and in connection with this end, the influence and wealth of their own order, they “ compassed sea and land to make proselytes.” They employed a system of artful and complicated policy, by which their very name has become synonymous with the terms that denote artifice and cunning. They gave secret instructions which were directly opposed to their published rules. They acquired by their intrigues the confidence of courtiers and princes, and sovereigns; and THE INQUISITION derived special advantages from their zeal. They were the sworn enemies of the Protestant cause; and every principle of justice and humanity was sacrificed to effect its total extirpation. “ The pernicious effects of their constitution rendered it early obnoxious to some of the principal powers in Europe, and brought on its downfall. The Emperor Charles the V. saw it expedient to check its progress in his dominions; it was expelled in England by James I. in 1604; in Venice in 1606; in Portugal in 1759; in France in 1764; in Spain and Sicily in 1767; and totally suppressed and abolished by Pope Clement XIV. in 1773.” The *restitution* of the order took place on the 7th of August, 1814, by a bull of the present Pope—as a reward, no doubt, for the zealous exertions of those Protestant states who had so amply contributed to the restoration of his Holiness ! !

NOTE S. (*Page 182.*)

The following passages are extracted from Dr. Moylan's Pastoral Address to the Roman Catholics of the city and diocese of Cork, and contain a Bull of Pope Pius VII. granting a *plenary indulgence*. I insert them in these notes, as a specimen of modern popery—and the reasonings of one of the most enlightened of the Catholic Prelates of the present age !

" Beloved Brethren,

" Animated with the warmest desire of promoting your eternal welfare, both from a sense of our duty, and out of the tenderest love of your dear souls, we resolved immediately on compleating our Cathedral Chapel, to establish a mission in it of pious exercises and instructions, for the space of a month; and in order to induce our brethren to attend thereat, and to profit by those effectual means of sanctification, we applied to the Holy See, for a solemn plenary indulgence, in form of a Jubilee, which the Holy Father was most graciously pleased to grant by a Bull,* to the following purport :

" Pius VII. by divine providence, Pope, grants unto each, and every one of the faithful of Christ, who after assisting, at least, eight times, at the holy exercise of the mission, (in the new Cathedral of Cork,) shall confess his or her sins, with true contrition, and approach unto the holy communion; shall devoutly visit the said Cathedral Chapel, and there offer up to God, for some space of time, pious and fervent prayers, for the propagation of the holy Catholic faith, and to the intention of our Holy Father, *a plenary indulgence applicable to the souls in purgatory, by way of suffrage, and this in form of a Jubilee.*

" Such, beloved brethren, is the great, the inestimable grace offered to us by the Vicar of Jesus Christ, in his name, and of which he earnestly invites us all to partake. The greater, the

* The Bull was granted at an audience, on the 14th of May, 1809.

more valuable it is, the more should we dread to abuse it, the more careful should we be to render ourselves worthy of it. The gifts of God are only for those who prepare their hearts to receive them.

" Prepare then, beloved brethren, we most earnestly exhort you, prepare your hearts to receive the fulness of the divine mercy ; it is offered to all, let no one refuse to accept of it ; let sinners by its means become just : and let the just by it become more justified. To neglect profiting of this grace, would be most highly injurious to the sacred source from whence it flows, and would justly render us unworthy of ever receiving the least mercy or favour at the hands of God.

" To you, obdurate and inveterate sinners, we in particular address ourselves. Too long, alas ! too long, have you strayed from the paths of justice, and wandered in the ways of iniquity. O profit of this favourable moment ! God now pressingly calls upon you to return to him : no longer harden your hearts, but on this day of his mercy listen to his sweet voice. The thunders of the divine vengeance are kept over your guilty heads, ready, if you persist in your rebellion, to burst upon you. You stand upon the brink of eternity ; and death, with the most dreadful horrors of hell surround you. This invitation of the divine mercy, may be the last you shall ever receive. It is written that God will hear us in the acceptable time. Surely this holy time of indulgence must be that most acceptable time. Those days of grace and mercy must be the days of your salvation. Ah ! profit of them—be reconciled to your offended God. If you neglect this grace—if you suffer this holy time of indulgence to pass without profiting of it ; there is every reason to fear, that the time of God's mercy shall pass from you, never more to return. Once again, then let me intreat you to have recourse to the throne of mercy, that you may find grace in seasonable aid. And you to whom the Almighty has given of the dew of heaven, and of the fat of the land : redeem your sins with alms, and your iniquities with works of mercy to the poor ; and perhaps God would forgive your offences !

" You who profoundly sleep in sin, awake—rouse yourselves from that fatal lethargy into which you have been so long plunged. Behold ! the treasures of God's grace are now open to you—the arms of his divine mercy are stretched out to receive you—he reaches forth his hands with peace and reconciliation towards you. Hasten then with confidence to the throne of mercy ; with heartfelt sentiments of true sorrow and compunction ; approach the fountain of grace, and wash your soiled baptismal robe in the blood of the Lamb. The ministers of Jesus Christ, invested with his authority—animated with his spirit—expect you with a holy impatience, *ready to ease you of that heavy burden of sin, under which you have so long laboured. Were your sins as red as scarlet, by the grace of the absolution, and application of this plenary indulgence, your souls shall become white as snow !!*

" Reconciled to God—purified by his grace—cleansed in his blood—discharged by the merciful Jesus Christ, from all the debts contracted with the divine justice, you will find in the observance of the laws of your Heavenly Father, the true peace of your souls; that peace which surpasses all understanding ; that peace which you have hitherto sought for in vain, but which you could never find, under the empire of your passions, which is enjoyed only by those who mildly bear the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ."

" Wherefore, dearly beloved, that you may all know, that which according to the Bull of his Holiness, is necessary to gain the benefit of this plenary indulgence, granted in form of a Jubilee you will observe,

" First.—That it will commence in our new Cathedral Chapel on the first Sunday of Advent, being the 28th day of this present month of November, and will continue until the festival of St. John the Evangelist, being Monday, the 27th day of December, both inclusive.

" Secondly.—In order to gain this plenary indulgence, it is necessary to be truly penitent ; to make a good confession ; to receive worthily the holy communion ; to assist at least eight times at the instructions and pious exercises of the mission, and

to offer up, for some time to God, in a visit to the cathedral, pious and fervent prayers, for the propagation of the Holy Catholic faith, and to the intention of our holy father, the Pope. Five Paters, and five Aves, and a Creed, to the above intention, will fulfil the above obligation.

“ Thirdly—All Priests approved of by us, to hear confessions, can, during the above time, absolve all such persons as present themselves with due dispositions at confession, in order to obtain this plenary indulgence, from all sins and censures, reserved to the Holy See, or to us—they enjoining upon such persons, as are thus absolved, a salutary penance.

“ We order this pastoral letter and instruction, to be read in every chapel of our diocese, in town and country, at every mass, on Sunday the 14th, Sunday the 21st, and Sunday the 28th of November, instant, and on Sunday the 5th of December next. Given at Cork, Nov. 2, 1813. FRANCIS MOYLAN.”—*Letters of Amicus Hibernicus*, printed at Dublin, 1816,—(by the Rev. Peter Roe, of Kilkenny.)

NOTE T. (*Page 275.*)

Lord King, in his “ Enquiry,” after citing the passage quoted by Dr. Campbell from *Clemens Romanus*, introduces another extract from the same Father, still more decisive on this subject. “ The Apostles foreknew through our Lord Jesus Christ, that “ contention would arise about the name of Episcopacy, and “ therefore being endued with a perfect foreknowledge, appointed “ the aforesaid officers, viz. *Bishops and Deacons*, and left the “ manner of their succession described, that so when they died, “ other approved men might succeed them and reform their “ office.” “ So that there were,” says Lord King, “ only two orders, *Bishop and Deacon*, instituted by the Apostles. And if they ordained but those two, I think no one had ever a commission to add a third, or to split one into two, as must be done,

if we separate the order of Presbyters from the order of Bishops.'
(*Enquiry*, ch. iv. § 10.)

The rise and progress of the episcopal order, and its gradual separation from the office of presbyter are clearly traced by Dr. Campbell in his lectures ; but no where is this subject more concisely and luminously discussed than in the "Treatise of Episcopacy" by the learned and pious RICHARD BAXTER. The title of this interesting volume is remarkable.—"A Treatise of "Episcopacy ; confuting by Scripture, reason, and the Church's "testimony, that sort of *diocesan churches*, prelacy and govern- "ment, which casteth out the Primitive church-species, episco- "pacy, ministry, and discipline, and confoundeth the Christian "world by corruption, usurpation, schism and persecution. "Meditated in the year 1640, when the *Et Cætera* oath was "imposed. Written 1671 and cast by. Published 1680 by "the importunity of our superiors, who demanded the reasons "of our Nonconformity."

NOTE U. (*Page 330.*)

The late Dr. Geddes attempted to establish a distinction between the *Catholic* and the *Popish* religion, an attempt however, which a consistent *Roman Catholic* will acknowledge to be most futile and unsuccessful. The passage I refer to is a curious one, and shews what was the opinion of this "*Catholic*" latitudinarian, on the subject of popery. The "*Catholic*" ought never "to be confounded with the *Popish* religion. The former is a "most amiable matron who inculcates nothing on the mind of her "children but the peaceful maxims of the gospel ; the latter is "an ambitious termagant" (Reader, the Author was a Catholic Priest !) "who has often encouraged her children to commit "almost every sort of crime. It was the *Popish*, not the *Catholic* religion, which could in 1537 excite 10,000 men, under

" the conduct of a monk, to rise in rebellion against Henry VIII.
" in consequence of his subjects having been freed from their
" oaths of allegiance by a bull of Paul III. It was the same
" Popish religion that in 1539 attempted to depose the same
" king and place Cardinal Pole, the dean of Exeter on his throne.
" It was this religion that sent Radolpho into England in 1568,
" for the vile purpose of corrupting the loyalty of the English
" Catholics, and to pave the way for the famous bull of Pius V.
" which deprived Queen Elizabeth of her title, dominion, dignity
" and privileges ; and forbade all her subjects under pain of
" *anathema* to obey her ! It was this religion, that the very next
" year, again erected the standard of sedition under the earls of
" Northumberland and Westmoreland ; and their want of success,
" the Popish *Servius* thinks, might have been owing to this—
" *that the papal denunciation had not been sufficiently made*
" *known to all the Catholics.* It was this religion, that in 1580
" sent Parsons of Campian into England, with the qualified bull
" of Gregory XIII. which in the hands of those two artful men
" was deemed a surer means of raising a successful rebellion,
" than the more violent one of his predecessor. It was this re-
" ligion that in 1588, sent the Spanish Armada to invade Eng-
" land, fraught with a powerful army, plenty of money, and
" treasures of indulgences for the purpose of dethroning a queen
" against whom Sixtus V. had confirmed all the censures of Pius
" and Gregory, *and granted a full pardon to all who should em-*
" *bark in the holy enterprise !* In short, I MAKE NO HESITA-
" TION TO AFFIRM THAT THE POPISH RELIGION (not the
" Catholic) HAS BEEN IMMEDIATELY OR IMMEDIATELY THE
" CAUSE OF ALMOST ALL THE POLITICAL DISTURBANCES
" IN EUROPE SINCE THE DAYS OF GREGORY THE
" SEVENTH." (Good's *Memoirs of Geddes*, p. 229.) Such is
the confession of a Catholic ! With respect to the assumed dis-
tinction, three questions suggest themselves. First, Is not the
Pope, the HEAD of the Catholic church ? Secondly, Has the
Catholic church by the voice of a general Council, ever limited
the power, defined the prerogatives, and condemned the mea-

sures of any of the Popes? Thirdly, Have the proceedings referred to, by Geddes, and which happened during a series of Papal reigns, ever been censured and condemned? So far from it, there has been no Council since the transactions last mentioned, and they took place soon after the sittings of the Council of Trent. Then, I need not draw the inference. The distinction is assumed and hypothetical, and till the Catholic church condemns the Pope, the *Catholic* and the *Popish* religion, are identically the same!

It is often asserted by the advocates of Roman Catholicism, that, *persecution is not sanctioned by the authority of the Church.* In addition to the proofs and reasonings alledged in the Lectures, I beg the reader's attention to the following passage, extracted from the Notes annexed to a folio edition of the Douay Bible, published in Manchester. These Notes are universally acknowledged by the Catholics to contain a true and authentic exposition of the sense attached by the Church, to the testimony of Scripture. That to which I particularly refer, is on Deut. xvii. 8, &c. The text is cited and explained in the first Lecture, p. 29—31: Let the reader, “mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the authorised *Roman Catholic* interpretation. “*Here we see what authority God was pleased to give to the Church guides of the Old Testament in deciding without appeal, all controversies relating to the law; promising that they should not err therein;* “**AND PUNISHING WITH DEATH SUCH AS PROUDLY REFUSED TO OBEY THEIR DECISIONS. AND SURELY HE HAS NOT DONE LESS FOR THE CHURCH GUIDES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT!**”

In this note it is asserted, that the power of “punishing with death” belongs to ecclesiastical rulers; and that such rulers are warranted in exercising their awful prerogative on those who “refuse to obey their decisions.” This is an unequivocal recognition of the principle which justifies all religious persecution. Let power be possessed, and the right of inflicting death is pronounced to be unquestionable. It may indeed be *expedient* not to exercise this right even where the power of doing so exists:

the state of society may be such as to render it highly impolitic and inconvenient; and in such circumstances the advocates of the right may very readily disclaim the intention of exercising it. But does toleration in this case result from the system of their religion? Far from it! It is owing to a counteraction of that system; and the force of opposite principles, is the true and the only cause of religious liberty.

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